THE

SCOTTISH CHIEFS,

A ROMANCE.

IN FIVE VOLUMES.

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There comes a voice that awakes my soul. It is the voice of years that are gone; they roll before me with all their deeds.
OSSIAN.

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THE

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CHAP. I.

MURRAY, guided by Ker, having led his followers by the most untrodden wilds of the Lanerk hills, avoided even the sight of a Southron soldier.

Cheered by so favourable a commencement of their expedition, they felt no dismay, when, at the glooming of evening, Ker descried at a distance a body of armed men sitting round a fire. They were stationed at the foot of a beetling rock which guards the western entrance to the Cartlane craigs. Murray ordered his men to fall back amongst the bushes, and making

he sig... ...icer... ...dilemma,) they struck the iron crows, brought for the purpose, into the interstices of the cliff; and catching at the branches which grew out of its precipitous side, with much labour, and in perfect silence, they gained the summit. That effected, they pursued their way with the same caution, till, after a long march, without encountering a human being, they came to the base of the huge rock which Wallace had made his fortress.

Ker, who expected to see it surrounded by an English army, was amazed to find a death-like solitude. In a low voice, he said to Murray, "The place is deserted! my brave friend has miraculously escaped, or, what is more probable, compelled by the extremity of his little garrison, has been obliged to surrender."

"We will ascend and see," was Murray's answer.

Ker led round the rock to the most accessible point; and mounting by the

projecting stones, with some difficulty gained the top. Silence pervaded every part; and the rugged interstices at the summit, which had formed the temporary houses of his comrades, were lonely. On entering the recess, where Wallace used to seek a few minutes slumber, the moon, which shone full into the cave, discovered something bright lying in a distant corner. Ker hastily approached it, recollecting what Wallace had told him; that if, during his absence, he could find means of escape, he would leave some weapon as a sign. A dagger, if it were by the south-point, where he must fight his way through the valley; and an arrow, if it were by the north; as he should then seek an asylum for his exhausted followers in the wilds of Glenfinlass.

It was the iron head of an arrow which the moon had silvered; and Ker catching it up, with a gladdened countenance exclaimed, "He is safe! this leads us to

Glenfinlass." He then explained to Murray what had been the arrangement of Wallace respecting this sign, and without hesitation they decided to follow him.

Turning towards the northern part of the cliff, they came to a spot which had been under the strongest guard of the enemy, but now, like the rest, was deserted. A narrow, winding path, led from this rocky platform, to a fall of water which rushed impetuously by the mouth of a large cavern. After they had descended the main craig, they clambered over the top of the cave; and entering upon another sweep of rugged hills, commenced a rapid march.

Traversing the lower part of Stirlingshire, they crossed Graham's Dyke;([a]) and pursuing their course westward, left Stirling castle far to the right. They ascended the Oichel hills; and proceeding along the wooded heights which overhang the banks of Teith, forded the river, and

entered at once into the broad valley which opened to them a distant view of Ben Lomond and Ben Lidi.

"There," exclaimed Ker, extending his hand towards the cloud-capped Lidi, "beneath the shadow of that mountain, we shall find the light of Scotland, our dear master-in-arms!"

At this intimation, the wearied Murrays,—like seamen long harassed on a tempestuous ocean, at sight of a port,—uttered a shout of joy; and hastening forward with renovated strength, met a foaming river roaring in their path. Despising all obstacles, they rushed in, and buffeting the waves, soon found a firm footing on the opposite shore. The sun shone cheerily above their heads, and illuminating the sides of the mountains, hung their umbrageous defiles with dewy splendour. Ben Lidi, the standard of their hope, seemed to wave them on, as the white clouds streamed from its summit, and rolling down its dark sides,

floated in strange visionary shapes over the lakes beneath.

When the little troop halted on the shore of Loch Vanachoir, the mists which lingered on the brow of Lidi, slowly descended into the valley, and covering the mouth of the pass that led from the loch, seemed to shut them at once between the mountain and that world of waters. Ker, who had never been in these tracks before, became alarmed; but Murray, who remembered having explored them with his father in his way to Argyleshire, led forward through a steep rough road on the side of the mountain. As they clung by the slippery rocks which overhung the lake, the mists dissolved into a heavy shower; and by degrees clearing away, discovered the shining heads of Ben Lomond and Ben Chochan.

They now entered a winding labyrinth of craigs; and passing onward, gradually descended amid pouring torrents, and gaping chasms overlaced with brambles,

which must have betrayed less wary travellers to inevitable destruction; till the augmented roar of waters intimated to Murray that he drew near the great fall of Glenfinlass. The river, though rushing on its course with the noise of thunder, was scarcely discerned through the thick forest which groaned over its waves. Here, towered a host of stately pines; and there, the lofty beeches, birches, and mountain ash, bending over the flood, interwove each others branches; and formed an arch so impenetrable, that, while the sun brightened the tops of the mountains, all beneath lay in deep shadow.

The awful entrance to this sublime valley, struck the whole party with a feeling that made them pause. It seemed as if to these sacred solitudes, hidden in the very bosom of Scotland, no hostile foot dared intrude. Murray looked at Ker: "We go, my friend, to arouse the genius of these wilds. Here are the native fastnesses of Scotland; and from

this pass, the spirit will issue, that is to bid her enslaved sons and daughters be free!"

They entered: and with beating hearts pursued their way along the western border of Loch Lubnaig, till the royal heights of Craignacoheilg shewed their summits, covered with heath, and many an ivied turret. The forest, stretching far over the valley, lost its high trees in the shadows of the surrounding mountains, and told them they were now in the centre of Glenfinlass.

Ker put his bugle to his lips and sounded the pibroch of Ellerslie. A thousand echoes returned the notes; and after a pause, which allowed the last response to die away, the air was answered by a horn from the heights of Craignacoheilg. At the same moment, an armed man appeared on the rock, leaning forwards. Ker drew near, and taking off his bonnet that he might be known, called aloud:—Stephen! It is William Ker who speaks. I come

with the Lord Andrew Murray of Bothwell, to the support of our commander Sir William Wallace."

At these words, Stephen placed his bugle to his mouth, and in a few minutes the rock was covered with the members of its little garrison. Women and children appeared, shouting with joy; and the men, descending the side next the glen, hastened to bid their comrades welcome. One advanced towards Murray, who instantly recognised him to be Sir Roger Kirkpatrick of Torthorald. The chiefs saluted each other; and Lord Andrew, pointing to his men, said—"I have brought these few brave fellows to the aid of Sir William Wallace. Poor as is my offering, I am impatient to express my gratitude to him, for the blessing he preserved to me; the life of my uncle Mar."

Kirkpatrick's answer disappointed the eager spirit of the young warrior: "I am sorry, brave Murray, that you have no better knight to receive you than myself.

I, and the gallant chieftain, have not yet met; but I am in arms for him; and the hour of retribution for my injuries, as well as his, is at hand."

"But where is Sir William Wallace?" demanded Murray.

"Gone towards the Forth, to rouse that part of sleeping Scotland. If all he meet have my spirit, they will not require a second call. Now is the time to aim the blow; and thanks to the accident which brought me the welcome news, that an arm was raised that would strike it home."

As he spoke, he led Murray to the cliffs which crown the summit of Craignacoheilg; and conducting him into the lower apartment of a tower, which had once been a favourite hunting-lodge of the great King Fergus, he welcomed him a second time: "This," said he, "is the far-famed *lodge of the three Kings:* here did our heroic Fergus, attended by his royal allies Durstus the Pict, and Dionethus the Briton, reside during their huntings in

Glenfinlass!([b]) And here, eight hundred years ago, did the same glorious prince, form plans which saved his kingdom from a foreign yoke! On the same spot, we will lay ours; and in their completion, rescue Scotland from a tyranny more intolerable than that which menaced him. Yes, Murray; there is not a stone in this building, that has not a voice, which calls aloud to us to draw the sword, and free the people for whom that illustrious monarch so often shed his blood."

"And by the ghost of that same Fergus, I swear," exclaimed Murray, "that my honest claymore shall never shroud its head, while an invader be left alive in Scotland!"

Kirkpatrick caught him in his arms:— "Brave son of the noble Bothwell, thou art after mine own heart! The blow which the dastard Cressingham durst aim at a Scottish chief, still smarts upon my cheek; and rivers of his countrymen's blood shall wash out the stain. After I

had been persuaded by his serpent eloquence, to swear fealty to Edward on the defeat at Dunbar, I vainly thought that Scotland had only changed a weak and unfortunate prince, for a wise and victorious King: but when in the courts of Stirling, I heard Cressingham propose to the barons, north of the dyke, that they should give their strongest castles into English hands; when I opposed the measure, with all the indignation of a Scot who saw himself betrayed, he first tried to over-turn my arguments; and finding that impossible;—as I repeated them with redoubled force—he struck me!—Powers of earth and heaven, what was then the tempest of my soul!—I drew my sword, and would have laid him dead at my feet, had not my obsequious countrymen held my arm, and dragged me from the apartment.

"Covered with dishonour by a blow which I could not avenge, I fled to my brother-in-law Sir John Scott, of Loch

Doine. With him, for a time, I buried my injury from the world; but it lived in my heart; it haunted me day and night, calling for revenge.

" In such an hour, how did I receive the tidings that Sir William Wallace was in arms against the tyrant!—It was the voice of retribution calling me to peace of mind!—Even my bed-ridden kinsman partook my emotions; and with his zealous concurrence, I led a band of his hardiest Loch Doiners to reinforce the brave Lanerkers on this rock.

" Two days, I have now been here, awaiting in anxious impatience the arrival of Wallace.—Oh! we will mingle our injured souls together, and at that moment set forth to Stirling; and there, in the very heart of his den, sacrifice the tiger Cressingham to the fate he merits!"

" But what, my brave friend," asked Murray, " are the forces you deem sufficient for so great an enterprise? How

many fighting men remain of Wallace's own company, besides your own?"

"About a hundred," replied Kirkpatrick, "including yours."

"Then how inadequate will be our whole strength, (in all, not three hundred men,) to storm so formidable a place as Stirling castle! To attempt it without a thousand men at least, would be to hazard our whole enterprise.—It is garrisoned by four times that number; and the situation doubles their advantage."

"True," answered the knight, "but when honest vengeance nerves a single arm, it is equal to a hundred. O! would to Heaven that I were this moment, with my Loch Doiners alone, in the citadel of Stirling! neither Cressingham, nor any of his proud council should breathe another hour!"

"Were your Loch Doiners there," returned Murray, "they might indeed sell their lives dearly, and send many a South-

ron to purgatory; but how, with so small a band as that we command, are they to get into the citadel? The brunt of the contest must be before the walls; and nought but a proportionate force can be of any avail. Having passed the Rubicon, we must go forward; but resolution, not rashness, must be the principle of our proceedings.—And my opinion is, that a few minor advantages obtained, our countrymen would flock to our standard; the enemy would be intimidated; and we should carry thousands instead of hundreds before the walls of Stirling. To attempt it now would invite defeat, and pluck upon us the ruin of our project."

"You are right, young man," cried Kirkpatrick; "my grey head, forgetting its experience, and rendered impetuous by insult, did not see the blind temerity of my scheme. I would rather, for years, watch the opportunity of taking a signal revenge, than not accomplish it at last:

Oh! I would rather waste all my life in these solitary wilds, and know that at the close of it, I should see the blood of Cressingham on these hands, than live a prince and die unrevenged!"

Stephen and Ker now entered: the latter paid his respects to Sir Roger, and the former informed Murray, that having disposed of his present followers, with those who had arrived before; he was come to lead him to share some refreshment in the banquetting-room of the tower. "What?" cried Murray, full of glad amazement: "Is it possible that my cousin Helen's troop have reached their destination? None other belonging to Bothwell castle, had any chance of escaping their jailor's hands."

Kirkpatrick interrupted Stephen's reply, by telling Murray, that while he and Ker were at the board, he would dispatch expresses to two brave cousins of his, the Drummonds of Stobhall and Concraig, who, as they were in the same

shire, would not be long in sending him each a hundred men: "So my good Lord Andrew," cried he, striking him on the shoulder, "shall the snow-ball gather, that is to fall on Edward to his destruction!"

Murray approved his zeal: and bidding him a short adieu, followed Stephen and Ker into the hall. A haunch of venison of Glenfinlass smoaked on the board; and goblets of wine from the bounteous cellars of Sir John Scott, brightened the hopes which glowed in every heart.

While the young chieftains were recruiting their exhausted strength, Stephen sat at the table, to satisfy the anxiety of Murray to know how the fifty Bothwellers came to Craignacoheilg; and by what fortunate occurrence, or signal act of bravery, Wallace could have escaped with his whole train from the foe-surrounded Cartlane craigs.

"Heaven smiled on us!" replied Stephen. "The very evening of the

day in which Ker left us, there was a carousal in the English camp. We heard the sound of the song and of riot; and of many an insult cast upon our besieged selves. About an hour after sunset, the noise sunk by degrees; and seemed to intimate that the revellers, overcome by excess, had fallen asleep. At this very time, owing to the heat of the day, so great a vapour had been exhaled from the lake beneath, that the whole of the northern side of the fortress-cliff was covered with a mist so exceedingly thick, that we could not discern each other at a foot's distance. *Now is the moment*, said our gallant leader. *The enemy are stupefied with wine; the rock is clothed in a veil: —It is the shield of God that is held before us! under its shelter let us pass from their hands!*

"He called us together; and making the proper dispositions, commanded the children and women, on their lives, to keep silence. He then led us to the top

of the northern cliff: it overhung a cave, and also a strong guard of the enemy. By the assistance of a rope, held above by several men, our resolute chief, (twisting it rouud one arm to steady him, and with the other catching by the projecting stones of the precipice,) made his way down the rock and was the first who descended. He stood at the bottom, enveloped in the cloud which shrouded the mountain, till all the men of the first division had cleared the height; he then marshalled them with their pikes towards the foe, in case of an alarm. But all remained quiet on that spot; although the sounds of voices, both in song and laughter, intimated that the utmost precaution was necessary, as a wakeful part of the enemy was not far distant.

"Wallace re-ascended the rock halfway; and receiving the children, which their trembling mothers lowered into his arms; he handed them to the old men, who carried them safely through the

bushes which obscured the cave's mouth. The rest of our little garrison soon followed; and our sentinels receiving the signal that all were safe, drew silently from their guard, and closed our march through the cavern.

"This effected, we blocked up its mouth; that should our escape be discovered, the enemy might not, by seeing a passage, find the direct road we had taken.

"We pursued our way quite unmolested; and reached the northern outlets of the mountains, which opened to us the hospitable valleys of Stirlingshire. Here some kind shepherds gave the women and children temporary shelter; and Wallace seeing how thin were his ranks, and that if any thing was to be done for Scotland, he must swell his few to a host, put the whole party under my guidance; and telling me, (when the women and old men were rested) to march them to this place, ordered me here to await his re-

turn. Selecting ten men, with that small band he set out towards the Forth, where, he said, he hoped to meet some valiant friends, lovers of their country, who would readily embrace her cause.

"He had hardly been an hour departed, when Dugald observed a procession of monks descending the opposite mountain. They drew near, and halted in the glen. A crowd of women from the neighbouring hills had followed the train, and were now gathered round a bier which the monks had set down. I know not by what happy fortune I came close to the leader of the procession, but he saw something in my old rough features that declared me to be an honest Scot. "Friend," whispered he, "for charity conduct us to some safe place where we may rest, and withdraw this bier from the sacrilegious eye of curiosity."

"I made no hesitation; but desired the train to follow me into a byre belonging to the good shepherd who was my

host. On this motion, the common people went away; and Dugald and myself entering the place, were left alone with the monks. He went to collect provisions for them; and I remained with the brethren, who now sat down on the piled turf around.

"When the travellers threw up their hoods, which as mourners they had worn over their faces, I could not help exclaiming—"Alas, for the glory of Scotland, that this goodly group of stout young men, rather wore the helmet than the cowl!"—"How! (asked their principal, who did not himself appear to have seen thirty years;) Do we not pray for the glory of Scotland?—Such is our weapon." "True; (replied I) but while Moses prayed, Joshua fought. God gives the means of glory that they should be used." "But for what, old veteran, (said the monk, with a penetrating look) should we exchange our cowl for the helmet; knowest thou any thing of the Joshua that

would lead us to the field?"—There was something in the young priest's eyes that seemed to contradict his pacific words: they flashed an impetuous fire. My reply was short: "*Are you a Scot?*"—"I am, in soul and in arms."—"Then, knowest thou not the chief of Ellerslie?" As I spoke, for I stood close to the bier, I perceived the pall shake. The monk answered my last question with an exclamation:—"You mean Sir William Wallace!"

"Yes; my master!" I replied. My eyes, still rivetted on the bier, which shook more violently at these words, saw the pall hastily thrown off, and a beautiful youth, habited in a shroud, start from it, exclaiming—"Then is our pilgrimage at an end!—Lead us to him!"

"I confess I fell back several paces at this sight. The monk perceiving my terror, hastily said; "Fear not! he is alive—and seeks Sir William Wallace. His pretended death was a stratagem to

ensure our passage through the English army; for we are all soldiers like yourself." As he spoke, he opened his grey habit, and shewed me the mailed tartans of my country beneath."

"What, then!" interrupted Murray, "these monks were my faithful Bothwellers?"

"The same," replied Stephen: "I assured them they might now resume their own characters; for all who inhabited the valley we were then in, were true though poor and aged Scots. The young had long been drafted by Edward's agents to fight his battles abroad.

"Ah! (interrupted the shrouded youth) are we a people that can die for the honour of this usurper, and are we ignorant how to do it for our country? Lead us, soldier of Wallace, (cried he, stepping resolutely on the ground) lead us to your brave master; and tell him that a few determined men are come to shed their blood for him and Scotland.

"This astonishing youth, (for he did not appear to be more than fifteen,) stood before me in his robes of death like the spirit of some bright-haired son of Fingal: I looked on him with admiration; and explaining our situation, told him whither Wallace was gone; and of our destination, to await him in the forest of Glenfinlass.

"While the poor fellows were refreshing themselves with the provisions which Dugald soon after brought; we learnt from Kenneth, their conductor, that the troop, when it left Bothwell, under the expectation of your soon following them marched gaily on. But they had not proceeded far, before their scouts perceived the outposts of the English which surrounded Cartlane craigs: to avoid this danger, they took a circuitous path to a remote and less guarded entrance. Going forward with much precaution and difficulty, they reached the convent of St. Columba, at the western side of the

craigs. Kenneth knew the abbot; and entering it under covert of the night, obtained permission for his men to rest there. The youth, now their companion, was a student in the church. He had been sent thither by his mother, a pious lady, in the hope that, as he is of a very gentle nature, he would attach himself to religious retirement, and become a novice for the sacred tonsure. But courage often springs with most strength in the softest frames.

"The moment this youth discovered our errand, he tried every persuasive to prevail on the abbot to permit him to accompany us. But his entreaties were vain, till wrought up to vehement anger, he threatened, that if he were prevented joining Sir William Wallace, he would take the earliest opportunity to escape, and commit himself to the peril of the English pikes.

"The abbot, seeing him determined, with reluctance granted his wish:—and

then it was, (said Kenneth) that the youth seemed inspired. It was no longer an enthusiastic boy, we saw before us, but an angel, gifted with wisdom to direct, and enterprise to lead us. It was he proposed disguising ourselves as a funeral procession: and while he painted his blooming countenance of a death-like paleness, and stretched himself on the bier, the abbot sent to the English army, to request permission for a party of monks to cross the Cartlane craigs, in their way to the cave of St. Columba, in Stirlingshire, whither they carried a dead brother to be entombed. Our young leader hoped, that in passing amongst the craigs, we might find an opportunity to apprize Wallace that we were friends, and ready to reinforce his exhausted garrison.

"On our entrance into the passes of the craigs, (continued Kenneth) the English commander mentioned the fate of Bothwell, and the captivity of Lord Mar; and with very little courtesy to

sons of the church, ordered the bier to be opened, to see whether it really did contain a corpse, or provisions for our besieged countrymen. We had certainly expected this investigation; else we might as well have wrapped the trunk of a tree in the shroud we carried, as a human being. We knew that the superstitious hatred of the Southrons, would not allow them, designedly, to touch a Scottish corpse, and therefore we feared no detection from the eye's examination alone. This ceremony once over, we expected to have passed on without farther notice; and in that case, the youth would have left his pall, and performed the remainder of his journey on foot, in a similar disguise with the rest. But the strict watch of the English commander, confined him wholly to the bier; for as soon as he had looked on the supposed corpse, he gave orders to a band of men to see us fairly over the hills; to prevent all possible communication between us and our be-

sieged countrymen. In hopes of at last evading this vigilance, (on pretence of a vow of the deceased, that his bearers should perform a pilgrimage throughout the craigs,) we traversed them in every direction; and, I make no doubt, would have finally wearied out our guard, and gained our point, had not the circumstance transpired of Wallace's escape.

"How he had effected it, his enemies could not guess. Not a man of the besiegers was missing from his post; and not an avenue appeared by which they could trace his flight: but gone he was, and with him his whole train. On this disappointment, the Southrons retired to Glasgow, to give as good an account as they could, to their commander in chief, for the disgraceful termination of their siege. Dismayed at this intelligence, the guard hurried us into Stirlingshire, and left at the other side of yon mountain. But even then we were not free to release our charge, for the people around, at-

tracted by our procession, followed us into the valley. Had we not met with you, it was our young chief's design to have thrown off our disguises in the first safe place; and, divided into small bands, have severally sought Sir William Wallace."

"But where," demanded Murray, who had listened with delighted astonishment to this recital, "where is this admirable youth? Why, if Kenneth have learnt I am arrived, does he not bring him to receive my thanks and friendship?"

"It is my fault," returned Stephen, "that Kenneth will not approach you till your repast is over. I left him to see your followers properly refreshed. And for the youth, he seems timid of appearing before you. Even his name I cannot make known to you, till he reveals it himself; none know him here, by any other than that of Edwin. He has mentioned tomorrow morning for the interview."

"I must submit to his determination," replied Murray; "but I am at a loss to guess why so brave a creature should hesitate to meet me. I can only suppose he dislikes the idea of resigning the troop he has so well conducted; and if so, I shall think it my duty to yield to him the command."

"Indeed he richly deserves it;" returned Stephen; "for the very soul of Wallace seemed transfused into his breast, as he cheered us through our long march from the valley to Glenfinlass. He played with the children, heartened up the women; and when the men were weary and lagged by the way, he sat him down on the nearest stone, and sang to us legends of our ancestors, till every nerve was new braced with warlike emulation, and starting up, we proceeded onward with resolution, and even gaiety.

"When we arrived at Craignacoheilg, as the women were in great want, I sud-

denly recollected that I had an old friend in the neighbourhood. When a boy I had been the playfellow of Sir John Scott, of Loch Doine; and though I understood he was an invalid, I went to him; and while I told my tale, and begged for only a few necessaries for our babes and their mothers; his brother-in-law, Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, who sat by his pillow, took fire at my description of the patriotic valour of my master; and remembering his own outrages, immediately declared his determination to accompany me to Craignacoheilg. When he joined the troop on the summit of this rock, he embraced them separately, hailing the men as brethren and the women as sisters. The children he took in his arms, and while he held their hands in his, he said, "Let not this right hand be baptized,(c) till it has been bathed in the blood of the foe; for mercy belongs not to the enemy who is now doomed to fall beneath our swords!"

"It is indeed a deadly contest!" rejoined Murray, shuddering; "for evil has been the example of that foe. How many innocent bosoms have their steel pierced! How many helpless babes, have their merciless hands dashed against the stones!— Ruthless, ruthless war! even a soldier trembles to contemplate thy horrors!"

"Only till he can avenge them!" cried a stern voice, entering the apartment: it was Kirkpatrick's, and he proceeded: "When vengeance is in our grasp, tell me, brave Murray, who will then tremble? Dost thou not feel retribution in thine own hands? Dost thou not see the tyrant's blood at thy feet?" As he spoke, he looked down with a horrid exultation in his eyes; and bursting into a more horrible laugh, struck his hand several times violently on his heart: "It glads me! it glads me! I shall see it— and this arm shall assist to pull him down."

"His power in Scotland may fall," returned Murray, "but I fear that Edward will be too careful of his life, to come within reach of our steel."

"That may be," rejoined Kirkpatrick; "but my dagger shall yet drink the blood of his agents. Cressingham shall feel my foot upon his neck! Cressingham shall see that hand torn from its wrist which durst violate the unsullied cheek of a true Scotsman. Murray, I cannot live unrevenged."

As he spoke he quitted the apartment with a countenance of such tremendous fate, that the young warrior doubted it was human; it spoke not the noble resolves of patriotism, but the portentous malignity with which the great adversary of mankind determines the ruin of nations: it seemed to wither the grass as he moved; and Murray almost thought that the clouds darkened as the gloomy knight issued from the porch into the open air.

Kenneth Mackenzie joyfully entered the hall. Murray received him with a warm embrace; and after some conversation, in which Lord Andrew related the particulars of the disasters at Bothwell; they separated for the night; and Stephen Ireland led the wearied chieftan to a bed of freshly gathered heath, prepared for him in an upper chamber.

CHAP. II.

SLEEP, the gentle sister of that awful power which shrouds us in her cold bosom, and bears us in still repose to the blissful wakefulness of eternal life:—she, sweet restorer! wraps us in her balmy embraces; and extracting from our wearied limbs the effects of every toil, safely relinquishes us at morn to the new-born

vigour that is her gift; to the gladsome breezes which call us forth to labour and enjoyment.

Such was the rest of the youthful Murray, till the shrill notes of a hundred bugles piercing his ear, made him start. He listened; they sounded again. The morning had fully broken. He sprung from his couch, hurried on his armour, and snatching up his lance and target, issued from the tower. Several women were flying past the gate. On seeing him they exclaimed;—"Hasten! the Lord Wallace is arrived.—His bugles have sounded—our husbands are returned!"

Murray followed their eager footsteps, and reached the edge of the rock just as the brave group were ascending. A stranger was also there, whom, from his extreme youth and elegance, he judged to be the young protector of his Bothwellers; but he forbore to address him until they should be presented to each other by Wallace himself.

It was indeed the same. The youthful chieftain, on hearing the first blast of the horn, had started from his bed of heath, and buckling on his brigandine, with the swiftest had rushed to the rock; but at sight of the noble figure of Wallace, who first gained the summit, the young hero fell back: an undescribable awe checked his steps; and he stood at a distance, while Kirkpatrick welcomed the chief, and introduced Lord Andrew Murray. Wallace received the latter with a glad smile; and taking him warmly by the hand, "My gallant friend," said he, "I hope, with such assistance, to reinstate your brave uncle in Bothwell castle; and soon to cut a passage to even a mightier rescue! We must carry off Scotland from the tyrant's arms; or"—added he in a graver tone, "we shall only rivet her chains the closer."

"I am but a poor auxiliary;" returned Murray; "my troop is a scanty one, for it is of my own gathering. It is not my

father's, nor my uncle's strength, that I bring along with me. But there is one here (continued he) who has preserved a party of men (sent by my cousin Lady Helen Mar,) almost double my numbers."

At this reference to the youthful warrior, Sir Roger Kirkpatrick discerned him at a distance; and hastened towards him, while Murray briefly related to Wallace the extraordinary conduct of this unknown. The youth, on being told that the chief waited to receive him, hastened forward with a trepidation he never had felt before; but it was a trepidation that did not subtract from his own worth: it was the timidity of a noble heart which believed it approached one of the most perfect among mortals; and while its anxious pulse beat to emulate such merit, a generous consciousness of measureless inferiority, embarrassed him with a confusion so amiable, that Wallace, who perceived his extreme youth and his blushes, opened his arms and embraced

him. "Brave youth," cried he, "I trust that the power which blesses our cause, will enable me to return you, with many a well-earned glory, to the bosom of your family!"

Edwin was encouraged by the frank address of a hero, whom he expected to have found reserved, and wrapped in the deepest glooms of the fate which had roused him to be the thunderbolt of Heaven; and when he saw a benign, though pale countenance, hail him with smiles, he made a strong effort to shake off the awe with which the divine dignity of the figure and mien of Wallace, had oppressed him; and replying, with a still more mantling blush: "My family are worthy of your esteem; my father is brave: but my mother, fearing for me, her favourite son, prevailed on him to put me into a monastery. Dreading the power of the English even there, she allowed none but the abbot to know who I was. And as she chose to hide my name; and I have

burst from my concealment without her knowledge;—till I do something worthy of that name, and deserving her pardon, permit me, noble Wallace, to follow your footsteps by the simple appellation of Edwin."

"Noble boy!" returned the chief, "your wish shall be respected. We urge you no further to reveal, what such innate bravery must shortly proclaim in the most honourable manner."

The whole of the troop having ascended; while their wives, children, and friends, were rejoicing in their embraces; Wallace asked some questions relative to Bothwell, and Murray briefly related the disasters which had happened there.

"My father," added he, "is still with the worthy Neil Campbell, Lord of Lochawe.—Thither my uncle Sir John Murray is gone also, to request my father to send to the Cartlane craigs all the followers he took with him into Argyleshire. But as things are, would it not be well to

dispatch a messenger to Kilchurn castle, to say that you have sought refuge in Glenfinlass."

"Before he could arrive," returned Wallace, "I hope we shall be where Lord Bothwell's reinforcements may reach us by water. Our present object must be the Earl of Mar. He is the first Scottish earl who has hazarded his estates and life for Scotland; and as her best friend, his liberation must be our first enterprise. In my circuit through two or three eastern counties, a promising increase has been made to our little army. Sir Simon Fraser, of Oliver castle, and his brother, my old school-companions, have each given me a hundred men; and the brave Sir Alexander Scrymgeour, whom I met in West Lothian, has not only brought fifty stout Scots to my command; but, as the hereditary standard-bearer(d) of the kingdom, has come hither himself, to carry the royal banner of Scotland to glory or oblivion."

"To glory!" cried Murray, waving his sword; "O! not while a Scot survives, shall that golden lion([e]) again lick the dust!"

"No," cried Kirkpatrick, his eyes flashing fire; "rather may every Scot and every Southron fall in the struggle, and fill one grave! Let me," cried he, sternly grasping the hilt of his sword, and looking upwards; "let me, oh, Saviour of mankind, live but to see the Forth and the Clyde, so often stained with our blood, dye the eastern and the western oceans with the vital flood of these our foes; and when none is spared, then let me die in peace!"

The eyes of Wallace glanced on the young Edwin, who stood gazing on Kirkpatrick; and turning on the knight; with a powerful look of reprehension —"Check that prayer!" cried he; "remember, my brave companion, what the Saviour of mankind was; and then think, whether he who offered life

to all the world, will listen to so damning an invocation.—If we would be blessed in the contest, we must be merciful.

"To whom?" exclaimed Kirkpatrick; "to the robbers who tear from us our lands; to the ruffians who wrest from us our honours? but you are patient; you never received a blow!"

"Yes," cried Wallace, turning paler; "a heavy one, on my heart." "True," returned Kirkpatrick; "your wife fell under the steel of a Southron governor; and you slew him for it! You were revenged; your feelings were appeased."

"Not the death of fifty thousand governors," replied Wallace, "could appease my feelings. Revenge were insufficient to satisfy the yearnings of my soul." For a moment he covered his agitated features with his hand, and then proceeded; "I slew Heselrigge, because he was a monster under whom the earth groaned. My sorrow, deep, deep as it was—was but one of many which his ra-

pacity, and his nephew's licentiousness, had produced. Both fell beneath my arm; but I do not denounce the whole nation without reserve!—When the sword of war is drawn, all who resist must conquer or fall: but there are some noble English, who abhor the tyranny they are obliged to exercise over us; and when they declare such remorse, shall they not find mercy at our hands? Surely, if not for humanity, for policy's sake, we ought to give quarter: for the exterminating sword, if not always victorious, incurs the ruin it threatens. I even hope, that by our righteous cause, and our clemency, we shall not only gather our own people to our legions; but turn the hearts of the poor Welsh, and the misled Irish, whom the usurper has forced into his armies; and so confront him with troops of his own levying. Many of the English were too just to share in the subjugation of the country they had sworn to befriend. And their less honourable countrymen,

when they see Scotsmen no longer consenting to their own degradation, may take shame to themselves for assisting to betray a confiding people."

"That may be;" returned Kirkpatrick; "but surely you would not rank Aymer De Valence who lords it over Dumbarton; and Cressingham, who acts the tyrant in Stirling; you would not rank them amongst these conscientious English?"

"No;" replied Wallace; "the haughty oppression of the one, and the wanton cruelty of the other, have given Scotland too many wounds, for me to hold a shield before them; I leave them to your sword."

"And by heavens!" cried Kirkpatrick, gnashing his teeth with the fury of a tiger in sight of his prey; "they shall know its point!"

Wallace then informed his friends that he purposed marching next morning by day-break, towards Dumbarton castle:

"When we make the attack," said he, "it must be in the night; for I propose seizing by storm."

Murray and Kirkpatrick joyfully acquiesced. Edwin smiled an enraptured assent:—and Wallace, with many a gracious look and speech, disengaged himself from the clinging embraces of the weaker part of the garrison, who, seeing in him the spring of their husbands' might, and the guard of their own safety, clung to him as to a presiding deity.

"You, my dear countrywomen;" said he; "shall find a home for your aged parents, your children and yourselves, with the venerable Sir John Scott, of Loch Doine. You are to be conducted thither this evening; and there await in comfort, the happy return of your husbands, whom Providence now leads forth to be the champions of your country."

The women, filled with enthusiasm, uttered a shout of triumph; and embracing their husbands, said they were

ready to resign them wholly to Heaven and Sir William Wallace.

Wallace left them with these tender relatives, from whom they were so soon to part; and retired with his chieftains, to arrange the plan of his proposed attack.—Edwin, delighted with the glory which seemed to wave him from the pinnacles of Dumbarton rock, listened in profound silence to all that was said; and then hastened to his quarters, to prepare his armour for the ensuing morning.

CHAP. III.

IN the cool of the evening, while the young chieftain was thus employed, Kenneth entered and told him Sir William Wallace had called out his little army, that he might see its strength and numbers. Edwin, whose soul had become

not more enamoured of the panoply of war, than of the gracious smiles of his admired leader, at this intelligence threw his plaid over his brigandine, and placing a swan-plumed bonnet on his brows, hastily issued forth to meet his general.

Kirkpatrick had already taken his station at the head of his Loch Doiners, augmented by half the clan of Drummond. Scrymgeour waved the royal standard before his fifty followers; and Ireland coming up with the old stanch troop of Lanerkers; the thirty followers of Murray appeared, just as the two hundred Frasers entered from an opening in the rocks. Blood mounted into the cheek of Murray, as he compared his inferior numbers, and recollected the weight of obligation they were to repay, and the greater one he was now going to incur. He threw the standard, worked by Helen, (which now for the first time since they parted, he had unfurled) lightly on his shoulder; and turning to Wallace, "Be-

hold," said he, adverting to his men; "the poor man's might! It is great, for it is my all!"

"Great indeed, brave Murray!" returned Wallace, "for it brings me a host in yourself."

"I will not disgrace my standard!" said Murray, lowering the banner staff to Wallace. He started when he saw the flowing lock, which he could not help recognising. "This is my betrothed;" continued Murray in a gayer tone; "I have sworn to take her for better for worse; and I pledge you my troth that nothing but death shall part us!"

Wallace grasped his hand:—"And I pledge you mine, that the head whence it grew, shall be laid low, before I suffer so generous a defender to be separated, dead or alive, from this standard." His eye glanced at the impresse: "Thou art right!" continued he; "God doth indeed arm thee! and in the strength of

a righteous cause, thou goest with the confidence of success, to embrace victory like a bride!"

"No; I am only the bridegroom's man!" replied Murray, gaily moving off: "I shall be content with a kiss or two from the handmaids, and leave the lady for my general."

"Happy, happy, youth!" said Wallace to himself, as his eye pursued the agile footsteps of the young chieftain; "no conquering affection has yet thrown open thy heart; no deadly injury hath lacerated it with wounds incurable. Patriotism is a virgin passion in thy breast, and innocence and joy wait upon her!"

"We just muster five hundred men;" said Ker, advancing from the lines to Wallace; "but they are all as stout in heart as condition; and ready, even to-night, if you will it, to commence their march."

"No;" replied Wallace; "we must

not over-strain the generous spirit. Let them rest to-night; and to-morrow's dawn shall light us through the forest."

Ker, who acted as equerry to Wallace, now returned to the ranks to give the word; and they all marched forward.

Sir Alexander Scrymgeour, with his golden standard charged with the lion of Scotland, led the van. Wallace raised his bonnet from his head as it drew near. Scrymgeour lowered the staff. Wallace threw up his outstretched hand at this action, but the knight not understanding him, he stepped forward:—" Sir Alexander Scrymgeour," said he, " I am the country's soldier, not its sovereign; that standard must not bow to me. It represents the royalty of Scotland, before which we fight for her liberties. And if virtue yet dwell in the house of the valiant Saint David, some of his offspring will (when he hears of this day,) shake off the chains of the tyrant, and lead it forward to conquest and to a crown. Till such

an hour, let not that standard bend to any man."

Wallace fell back as he spoke; and Scrymgeour bowing his head in sign of acquiescence, marched on.

Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, at the head of his well-appointed Highlanders, next advanced. His blood-red banner streamed to the air; and as it bowed to Wallace, he saw that the indignant knight had adopted the thistle, the device of the hardy King Achaius;(f) but with a fiercer motto: —"*Touch and I pierce!*"

"That man, (thought Wallace, as he passed along) carries malignity and a relentless sword in his very eye!"

The Loch Doiners, a strong, tall, and well-armed body of men, marched on, and gave place to the advancing corps of Bothwell. The eye of Wallace felt as if turning from gloom and horror, to the cheerful light of day, when it fell on the bright and ingenuous face of Murray. Kenneth with his troop followed; and

the youthful Edwin, like Cupid in arms, closed the procession.

Being drawn up in line, their chief, fully satisfied, advanced towards them, and expressing his sentiments of the patriotism which brought them into the field, informed them of his intended march. He then turned to Stephen Ireland: "The sun has now set," said he, "and, before dark, you must conduct the families of my worthy Lanerkers to the protection of Sir John Scott. It is time that age, infancy, and female weakness, should cease their wanderings with us: to-night we bid them adieu, to meet them again in freedom and prosperity."

As Wallace ceased, and was retiring from the ground, several old men, and young women with their babes in their arms, rushed from behind the ranks, and throwing themselves at his feet, caught hold of his hands and garments:—"We go," said the venerable fathers, "to pray for your welfare:—and sure we are, a

crown will bless our country's benefactor, here or in heaven!"

"In heaven," replied Wallace, shaking the plumes of his bonnet over his eyes, to hide the moisture which suffused them; "I can have no right to any other crown."

"Yes," cried a hoary-headed shepherd; "you free your country from tyrants; and the people's hearts will proclaim their deliverer their sovereign!"

"May your rightful monarch, worthy patriarch," said Wallace, "whether a Bruce or a Baliol, meet with equal zeal from Scotland at large; and tyranny must then fall before courage and loyalty!'

The women wept as they clung to his hand; and one, the daughter of Ireland, holding up her child in her arms, presented it to him: "Look on my son!" cried she, with energy; "the first word that he speaks, shall be Wallace; the second, liberty. And every drop of milk

he draws from my bosom, shall be turned into blood, to nerve a conquering arm, or to flow for his country!"

At this speech, all the women held up their children towards him:—" Here," cried they, " we devote them to Heaven and to our country!—Adopt them, noble Wallace, to be thy followers in arms, when, perhaps, their fathers are laid low!"

Wallace, unable to speak, pressed their little faces separately to his lips, and then returning them to their mothers, laid his hand on his heart, and answered in an agitated voice—" They are mine!—my weal shall be theirs,—my woe, my own." As he spoke, he hurried from the weeping group, and immerging amid the cliffs, hid himself from their tears and their blessings.

He threw himself down on a shelving rock, whose fern-covered bosom projected over the winding waters of Loch Lubnaig; and while his eyes contemplated

its serene surface, he sighed, and thought how tranquil was nature till the rebellious passions of man, wearying of innocent joys, disturbed all by restlessness and violence.

The mists of evening hung on the gigantic tops of Ben Lidi and Ben Vorlich; and sailing forward, by degrees obscured the whole of the mountains; and left nothing for the eye to dwell on, but the long silent expanse of the lake beneath.

"So," said he, "did I once believe myself for ever shut in from the world, by an obscurity that promised me happiness as well as seclusion!—But the hours of Ellerslie are gone. No tender wife will now twine her faithful arms about my neck. No child of Marion's will ever be pressed to my fond bosom!—Alas, the angel that sunk my country's wrongs to a dreamy forgetfulness in her arms, she was to be immolated that I might awake!—My wife, my unborn babe, they both must bleed for Scotland!—and the sacri-

fice shall not be yielded in vain. No, Great God!" cried he, stretching his clasped hands towards heaven; "endow me with thine own spirit, and I shall yet lead my countrymen to liberty and happiness!—Let me counsel with thy wisdom; let me conquer with thine arm! and when all is finished, give me, O gracious Father! a quiet grave beside my wife and child."

Tears, the first he had shed since the hour in which he, (unconsciously for the last time) pressed his Marion to his heart, now flowed copiously from his eyes. The women; the children; had aroused all his recollections; but in so softened a train, that they melted his heart, till he wept. "It is thy just tribute, Marion!" said he: "It was blood you shed for me, and shall I check these poor drops!—Look on me sweet saint, best beloved of my soul:—O, hover near me in the day of battle; and thousands of thine and

Scotland's enemies shall fall before thy husband's arm !"

The plaintive voice of the Highland pipe, at this moment broke upon his ear. It was the farewel of the patriarch Lindsay, as he and his departing company descended the winding paths of Craignacoheilg. Wallace started on his feet. The separation had then taken place between his trusty followers and their families; and guessing the feelings of those brave men, from what was passing in his own breast, he dried away the traces of his tears; and once more resuming the warrior's cheerful look, sought that part of the rock where the Lanerk men were quartered.

As he drew near, he saw some standing on the cliff; and others leaning over, to catch another glance of the departing group ere it was lost amid the shades of Glenfinlass.

"Are they quite gone?" asked Du-

gald. "Quite," answered a young man, who seemed to have got the most advantageous situation for a view. "Then," cried he, "may Saint Andrew keep them till we meet again!"

"May a greater than Saint Andrew hear thy prayer!" ejaculated Wallace. At the sound of this response from their chief, they all turned round. "My brave companions," said he, "I come to repay this hour's pang, by telling you, that in the attack of Dumbarton, you shall have the honour of first mounting the walls. I shall be at your head, to sign each brave soldier with a patriot's seal of honour."

"To follow you, my lord," said Dugald, "is our duty."

"I grant it," replied the chief; "and as I am the leader in that duty, it is mine to dispense to every man the reward of his deserts; and to prove to all men that virtue alone is true nobility."

"Ah, dearest sir!" exclaimed Edwin;

who, having been assisting the women to carry their infants down the steep, on reascending heard the latter part of this conversation; "deprive me not of the aim of my life! These warriors have had you long; have distinguished themselves in your eyes:—deprive me not then of the advantage of being near you; it will make me doubly brave. O, my dear commander, let me only carry to the grave the consciousness, that next to your godlike self, I was the first to mount the rock of Dumbarton; and you will make me noble indeed!"

Wallace looked at him with a smile of such graciousness, that the youth threw himself into his arms:—"You will grant my boon, Sir William Wallace!"

"I will; noble boy!" said he: "Act up to your sentiments, and you shall be my brother."

"Call me by that name;" cried he, grasping Wallace's hand; "and I will dare any thing."

"Then be the first to follow me on the rock;" said he; "and I will lead you to an honour the highest in my gift; you shall unloose the chains of the Earl of Mar! And ye," continued he, turning to his men; "ye shall not find your country slow to commemorate the duty of such sons. Being the first to strike the blow for her freedom, ye shall be the first she will distinguish. I now speak as her minister: and as a badge to times immemorial, I bid you wear the Scottish lion on your shields."

A shout of proud joy issued from every heart. And Wallace, seeing that honour had dried the tears of regret, left them to their repose. He sent Edwin to his rest; and himself, avoiding the other chieftains, retired to his own chamber in the royal tower.

CHAP. IV.

PROFOUND as was the rest of Wallace, yet the first clarion of the lark awakened him. The rosy dawn shone in at the window; and a fresh breeze wooed him with its inspiring breath, to rise and meet it. But the impulse was in his own mind; he needed nothing outward to call him to action. Rising immediately, he put on his glittering hauberk, and issuing from the tower, raised his bugle to his lips, and blew so rousing a blast, that in an instant the whole rock was covered with soldiers.

Wallace placed his helmet on his head, and advanced towards them just as Edwin had joined him, and Sir Roger Kirkpatrick appeared from the tower. "Blest be this morn," said the old knight, "that rises to me, the happiest of my life! My

sword springs from its scabbard to meet it:—and ere this good steel be sheathed again," continued he, shaking it sternly; "what deaths may dye its point!"

Wallace shuddered at the ferocity with which his colleague contemplated those features of war, from which every humane soldier would seek to turn his thoughts, that he might encounter it with the steadiness of a man, and not the irresolution of a woman. To hail the field of blood with the fierceness of hatred, eager for the slaughter of its victim; to know any joy in combat, but that each contest might render another less necessary; did not enter into the imagination of Wallace until he had heard and seen the infuriate Kirkpatrick. He now talked of the coming battle with horrid rapture; and told the young Edwin that he should that day see Loch Lomond red with English blood.

Wallace, offended at such savageness, without answering him, drew towards Murray, (who had placed himself at the

head of his men,) and calling to Edwin, ordered him to march at his side. The youth seemed glad of the summons; and Wallace was pleased to observe it, as he thought that a longer stay with one who so grossly overcharged the feelings of honest patriotism, might breed disgust in his innocent mind against a cause which had so furious, and therefore unjust a defender.

"Justice and mercy ever dwell together;" said he to Edwin, who now drew near him; "for universal love is the parent of justice as well as of mercy. But implacable Revenge! whence did she spring but from the head of Satan himself?"

Though their cause appeared the same, never were two spirits more discordant than those of Wallace and Kirkpatrick. But Kirkpatrick did not so soon discover the dissimilarity; as it is easier for fairness to descry its opposite, than for foulness to apprehend that any thing can be purer than itself.

The forces now being drawn out, and marshalled according to the preconcerted order, the three commanders, with Wallace at their head, assembled in the van. Kenneth Mackenzie; and Stephen Ireland, (now returned from Sir John Scott's) covered the rear.

Without molestation they passed through the forest of Glenfinlass. The enemy thought it too desert a region to require a guard of soldiers; and only visiting it at certain seasons to carry off the deer, or to cut down some of those trees, for their navy, which had shaded the manly sports of many a Scottish king; no Southron at this time polluted its sacred borders.

The sun had just risen as the little band of patriots, the hope of Freedom! emerged upon the eastern bank of Loch Lomond. The bases of the mountains were yet covered with the dispersing mist of the morning, and were hardly distinguishable from the blue waters of the

lake which lashed the shore. The newly awakened sheep bleated from the hills; and the umbrageous herbage dropping dew, seemed glittering with a thousand fairy gems.

"Where is the man that would not fight for such a country!" exclaimed Murray, as he stepped over a bridge of interwoven trees which crossed one of the mountain streams:—"this land was not made for slaves. Look at these bulwarks of nature! Every mountain-head which forms this chain of hills, is an impregnable rampart against invasion. If Baliol had possessed but half a heart, Edward might have returned, even worse than Cæsar, from our shores;—without a cockle to decorate his helmet."

"Baliol has found the oblivion he incurred;" returned Wallace; "his son, perhaps, may better deserve the sceptre of such a country.—Let us cut the way; and he who merits the crown, will soon rush to the goal."

"Then it will not be Edward Baliol;" rejoined Scrymgeour: "I was so unhappy, once, (during the reign of his father) to carry a dispatch to him from Scotland.—He was then banquetting in all the luxuries of the English court; and such a voluptuary I never witnessed!"

Sir Alexander then entered into particular details of his base effeminacy, and ended with saying, "I left this scene of more than folly; inly praying, that such a puppet might never disgrace the throne of our manly race of kings."

"If such be the tuition of our lords in the court of Edward—and wise is the policy for his own views!" observed Ker; "what can we expect from even the Bruce? They were ever a nobler race than the Baliol:—but bad education, and luxury, will debase the most princely minds."

"I saw neither of the Bruce, when I was in London;" replied Scrymgeour; "the Earl of Carrick was at his house in

Cleveland; and Robert Bruce, his eldest son, with the English army in Guienne. But they bore a manly character; particularly young Robert, who, notwithstanding the pains which the effeminate son of Baliol took to please the fair of the court, carried off both the palm and the myrtle from him. It seems, his person and manners are graceful as well as manly; and while the English ladies call him the *flower of courtesy;* a knight told me, that since he had distinguished himself in the jousts and battles of Guienne, he had received from the fair of that country, the equally flattering appellation of *prince of chivalry.*"

"It would be more to his honour," interrupted Murray, "if he compelled them to acknowledge him as *Prince of Scotland.* With so much bravery, how can he allow such a civet-cat as Edward Baliol, to bear away the title which is his by the double right of blood and virtue?"

"Perhaps," said Wallace, "the young

lion only sleeps!—The time may come, when both he and his father will rise from their lethargy, and throw themselves at once into the arms of Scotland. Let them win her crown from the usurper who now holds it, and every honest Scot will hail the name of Bruce as his lawful and respected sovereign. To such an end, I look. To stimulate the dormant patriotism of these two princes, by shewing them a subject, leading their people to liberty, is one great end of the victories I seek. None other than a brave King can bind the various interests of this distracted country in one; and, therefore, for fair freedom's sake, my heart turns towards the Bruces with most anxious hopes."

"For my part," cried Murray, "I have always thought, that the lady we will not woo, we have no right to pretend to.—If the Bruces will not be at the pains to snatch Scotland from drowning, I see no reason for making them a present of what will cost us many a wet jacket be-

fore we tug her from the waves. He that wins the day, ought to wear the laurel: and so, once for all, I proclaim him King of good old Albin, (g) who will have the glory of driving her oppressors beyond her walls."

Wallace did not hear this last sentiment of Murray's as it was spoken in a lowered voice in the ear of Kirkpatrick.—"I perfectly agree with you;" was that knight's reply; "and in the true Roman style, may the death of every Southron now in Scotland, and as many more as Fate chuses to yield us; be the preliminary games of his coronation!"

Wallace, who heard this, turned to Kirkpatrick with a gentle rebuke in his eye: "Balaam blest, when he meant to curse!" said he; "but you curse when you mean to bless. Are not such prayers mere blasphemies?—for, how can we seriously expect a blessing on our arms, when our invocations are all for the blood of our enemies; and not one soli-

tary prayer is put up, for that happy peace, which ought to be the aim of warfare?"

"Blood for blood, is only justice!" cried Murray; "and how can you, noble Wallace, as a Scot and as a man, plead for the villains who have stabbed us to the heart?"

"I plead not for them;" returned Wallace; "but for the poor wretches, many of whom follow their leaders by force to the field of Scotland, I would not inflict on them the cruelties we now resent. It is not to aggrieve, but to redress, that we carry arms. If we make not this distinction, we turn courage into a crime; and plant disgrace instead of honour upon the warrior's brow."

"I do not understand commiserating the wolves who have so long made havoc with all we value. Methinks," replied Kirkpatrick in a surly tone, "that such maidenly mercy is rather out of place in the mouth of the leader of so many brave men."

Wallace turned to him with a benign smile: "I will answer you, my valiant friend, by adopting your own figure. It is, that these Southron wolves may not confound us with themselves, that I wish to shew in our conduct, rather the generous ardour of the faithful guardian of the fold, than the rapacious fierceness which equals them with the beasts of the desert. As we are men and Scots, let the burthen of our prayers be, the preservation of our country, not the slaughter of our enemies!—The one is an ambition with which angels may sympathize:—the other, a horrible desire which speaks the nature of devils."

"In some cases this may be;" replied Sir Roger, a little reconciled to the argument; "but not in mine. My injury yet burns upon my cheek:—and as nothing but the life blood of Cressingham can quench it, I will listen no more to your doctrine till I am revenged. That done, I will not forget your lesson."

"Generous Kirkpatrick!" exclaimed Wallace, "nothing that is really cruel, can dwell with such manly candour. Say what you will, I can trust your heart after this moment!"

They had crossed the river Ennerie; and were issuing from between its narrow ridge of hills, when Wallace, pointing to a stupendous rock, which rose in solitary magnificence in the midst of a vast plain, exclaimed, "There is Dumbarton castle! Earl Donald must repass this river to-morrow with us; and then we shall have made ourselves a power:—for that citadel holds the fetters of Scotland; and if we break them there, every minor link will easily give way."

The men uttered a shout of anticipated triumph at this sight. And proceeding, soon came in view of the fortifications which helmeted the rock. As they approached, they discovered that it had two summits; being in a manner cleft in

twain; the one side, rising in a pyramidal form; and the other of a more level shape, sustained the ponderous buildings of the fortress.

It was dusk when the little army arrived in the rear of a close thicket which, skirting the eastern dyke of the castle, reached to an immense depth on the plain. On this spot Wallace rested his men; and while they placed themselves in ambush till the appointed time of attack, he looked forward, and perceived, through an opening in the wood, the gleaming of troops on the ramparts, and fires beginning to light on a lonely watch-tower which crowned the pinnacle of the highest rock.

"Poor fools!" exclaimed Murray, "like the rest of their brethren of clay, they look abroad for evils, and prepare not for those which are even at their doors!"

"That beacon-fire," cried Scrymgeour,

"shall light us to their chambers; and for once we thank them for their providence."

"That beacon-fire," whispered Edwin to Wallace, "shall light me to honour? To-night, by your agreement, I shall call *you, brother*, or lie dead on the summit of those walls!"

"Edwin," said Wallace, "act as you say; and deserve, not only to be called my brother, but to be the first patriot knight!"

He then turned towards the lines; and giving his orders to each division, directed them to seek repose on the surrounding hether, till the now glowing moon should have sunk her tell-tale light in the waves.

CHAP. V.

ALL obeyed the voice of their commander, and retired to rest. But the eyes of Edwin could not close; his eager spirit was already on the walls of Dumbarton. His rapid mind anticipated the ascent of his general and his troop. But there, an imagination, no less just than ardent, suggested the difficulties attending so small a force, without knowledge of the situation of the point they aimed at, assailing so formidable a garrison. A sudden thought struck him.—He would mount that rock alone; he would seek to ascertain the place of Lord Mar's confinement, that not one life in Wallace's faithful band might be lost in a vague search.

"Ah! my general," exclaimed he, "Edwin shall be the first to spring those ram-

parts! he shall tread that dangerous path alone; and when he has thus proved himself not unworthy of thy confidence, he will return, to lead thee and thy soldiers to a sure victory; and himself to honour by thy side!"

This fervent apostrophe, breathed to the night alone, was no sooner uttered, than he stole from the thicket into which he had cast himself to repose.—He looked towards the embattled cliff; its summit stood bright in the moonlight, but deep shadows lay beneath. "God be my speed!" cried he, and wrapping himself in his plaid, so mixed its dark hues with the weeds and herbage at the base of the rock, that he made its circuit without having attracted observation.

The south side seemed the most easy of ascent; and by that he began his daring attempt. Having gained the height, he clambered behind a buttress, the shadow of which cast that part of the wall into such black obscurity, that he crept

safely through one of its crenelles, and dropping gently inwards, alighted on his feet. Still keeping the shadowed side of the battlements, he proceeded cautiously along; and so stilly was his motion, that he passed undiscovered, even by the sentinels who guarded this quarter of the fortress.

He soon arrived at the open square before the citadel:—it was yet occupied by groups of Southron officers, who were gaily walking to and fro under the light of the moon. In hopes of gaining information by listening to their discourse, he concealed himself behind a chest of arrows, and as they passed backwards and forwards, distinctly heard them jesting each other about divers fair prisoners whom they had possessed at various times. The conversation terminated in a debate whether or no the indifference which their governor De Valence manifested to the majestic beauties of the Countess of Mar, were real or assumed:

a thousand insolent remarks were made on the subject; and Edwin gathered sufficient from the discourse to understand that the Earl and Countess were treated severely, and confined in a large square tower in the cleft of the rock.

Having learnt all that he could expect from these officers, he speeded under the friendly shadow, towards the other side of the citadel; but he arrived just as the guard approached to relieve the sentinels of the northern postern.—He laid himself close to the ground, and happily overheard the word of the night, as it was given to the new watch.—This providential circumstance saved his life.

Finding no mode of regress from this place, but by the postern, (at which stood the sentinel,) or by attempting a passage through a small adjoining tower, the door of which was open; he considered a moment, and then deciding for the tower, as indeed, the only probable means of escape, he stole unobserved into it. For-

tunately, it was at present unoccupied:—Edwin found it full of spare arms, with two or three vacant couches in different corners, where he supposed the officers on guard occasionally reposed: several watch-cloaks lay on the floor. He readily apprehended the use he might make of this circumstance, and throwing one over his shoulders, climbed to a large embrasure in the wall, and forcing himself through it, dropped on to a declivity on the other side, which shelved down to the cleft wherein he now saw the square tower.

He had scarcely lit on firm ground, when a sentinel, followed by two others with presented pikes, approached him, and demanded *the word.*—*Pembroke*—was his rapid reply. "Why leap the embrasure?" said one. "Why not enter by the postern?" demanded another. The conversation of the officers before the citadel had given him a hint on which he formed his answer. "Love, my brave

comrades," replied he, "seldom chuses even ways. I go on a message from a young ensign in the keep, to one of the Scottish damsels in yonder tower. Delay me, and his vengeance will fall upon us all." "Cupid prosper you, my good lad!" was their answer; and with a lightened step he hastened towards the tower.

Not deeming it safe, or needful, to seek an interview with any of the Earl's family, he crept along its base and across the works, till he reached the high wall that blocks up egress from the north. He found this formidable curtain constructed of fragments of rock; and for the convenience of the guard to ascend, to precipitate any assailants (who might be daring enough to scale it from without,) a sloping platform from within, led to the top of the wall. On the other side it was perpendicular. A solitary sentinel stood there; and how to pass him, was Edwin's next device.—To attack him would be, a desperate hazard, he being one of a

close chain of guards, planted at short distances all around the interior of the fortress. Hence, were his voice to be raised in the least, it would call a regiment to his assistance, and Edwin must be seized on the instant.

Aware of his danger, but not dismayed, the adventurous youth bethought him of his former excuse; and remembering a flask of spirits which Ireland had put into his pouch on the troop leaving Glenfinlass, he affected to be a little intoxicated, and staggering up to the man, accosted him in the character of a servant of the garrison.

The sentinel did not doubt the appearance of the boy; and Edwin holding out to him the flask, said that a pretty girl in the great tower had not only given him a long draught of the same good liquor, but had filled his bottle, that he might not lack amusement while her companion, one of Lady Mar's maids-in-waiting, was tying up a true-lover's knot

to send to his master in the garrison. The man believed Edwin's tale the more readily, as he thrust the flask into his hand, and bade him drink: "Do not spare it," cried he; "the night is chilly, and I shall get more where that came from."

The unsuspecting Southron returned him a merry reply, and putting the flask to his head, soon drained its contents. They had the effect Edwin desired. The soldier became flustered and impatient of his duty. Edwin perceived it, and yawning, complained of drowsiness. "I would go to the top of that wall, and sleep sweetly in the moon-beams," said he, "if any goodnatured fellow would meanwhile wait for my pretty Scot!"

The half inebriated Southron liked no better sport; and regardless of duty, he promised to draw nearer the tower, and bring from the fair messenger the token Edwin expected for his master.

Having thus far gained his point, with

an apparently staggering, but really agile step, he ascended the wall. A leap from this dizzy height was his only way to rejoin Wallace. To retread his steps through the fortress, in safety, would hardly be possible; and besides, such a mode of retreat would leave him uninformed on the second object of his enterprise: to know the most vulnerable side of the fortress.

He threw himself along the summit of the wall, as if to sleep. He looked down, and saw nothing but the blackness of space: for here the broad expanse of shadow rendered rocks and building of the same hue and level. But hope buoyed him up in her arms; and turning his eyes towards the sentinel, he observed him to have arrived within a few paces of the square tower. This was Edwin's moment; and grasping the projecting stone of the battlement, he threw himself from its summit, and fell a fearful depth to the cliffs beneath.

Meanwhile, Wallace, having seen his brave followers depart to their repose, reclined himself along a pile of moss-grown stones, which, in the days of the renowned Fingal, had covered the body of some valiant Morven chieftain. He fixed his wakeful eyes on the castle, now illumined in every part by the fulness of the moon's lustre, and considered which point would be most assailable by the scaling ladders he had prepared. Every side seemed a precipice. The Leven surrounded it on the north and the west: the Clyde, broad as a sea, on the south. —The only place that seemed at all accessible was the side next the dyke behind which he lay. Here the ascent to the castellated part of the rock, because most perpendicular, was the least guarded with outworks: and, by this, he determined to make the attempt, as soon as the setting moon should involve the garrison in darkness.

While he yet mused on what might be

the momentous consequences of the succeeding midnight hours, he thought he heard a footstep approaching, with a swift though cautious tread. He raised himself, and laying his hand on his sword, saw a figure wrapped in a cloak, and advancing towards him.

"Who art thou?" demanded Wallace.

"A faithful Scot," was the reply.

Wallace recognised the voice of Edwin.—"What has disturbed you? Why do you not take rest with the others?"

"That we may have the surer to-morrow;" replied the youth: "I am just returned from the summit of yon rock."

"How!" interrupted Wallace: "Have you scaled it alone, and are returned in safety?"

Wallace caught him in his arms: "Intrepid, glorious boy! tell me for what purpose did you thus hazard your precious life?"

"I wished to learn its most pregnable part;" replied Edwin, his young heart

beating with triumph at these encomiums from his commander; "and particularly where in the castle the good Earl is confined, that we might make our attack directly to the point."

"And have you been successful, my brave Edwin?" demanded Wallace.

"I have," was his answer. "Lord Mar and his lady are kept in a square tower which stands in the cleft between the two summits of the rock. It is on every side, not only surrounded by embattled walls which flank the ponderous buttresses of this huge dungeon, but the space on which it stands is bulwarked at each end by a stone curtain of fifteen feet high, guarded by turrets full of armed men."

"And yet by this side, you suppose we must ascend?" said Wallace.

"Certainly; for if you attempt it on the west, there we should have to scale the watch-tower cliff, which is nearly twice as high as the other. Should we

take the south, and gain the fortress; we must cut through the whole garrison, before we could reach the Earl. And this side the dyke, (which rather should be called a deep morass,) lies too near the foot of the rock to admit an approach without the greatest danger. But on the north, where I descended; by wading through part of the Leven, and climbing from cliff to cliff, I have every hope you may succeed."

Edwin recounted to his general every particular of his progress through the fortress; and by the minuteness of his topographical descriptions, enforced the arguments he had advanced, for the north to be the chosen point of attack. Closing his narrative, he explained to the anxious inquiry of Wallace, how he had escaped accident in a leap of so many feet. The wall was covered with ivy; he caught by its branches in his descent, and at last happily fell amongst a thick bed of furze. After this, he clambered down the steep

rock, and fording the Leven, which was there only knee deep, he appeared before his general, elate in heart, and bright in valour.

"The intrepidity of this action," returned Wallace, glowing with admiration at so noble a daring in so young a creature; "merits that every confidence should be placed in the result of your observations. Your safe return is a pledge that our design is approved. And when we go in the strength of Heaven, who can doubt the issue! This night, when the Lord of battles puts that fortress into our hands, before the whole of our little army you shall receive that knighthood which you have so richly deserved. Such, my truly dear brother, my noble Edwin, shall be the reward of your virtue and toil!"

Wallace would now have sent him to repose himself; but animated by the success of his adventure, and exulting in the honour which was so soon to stamp a

sign of this exploit upon him for ever, he told his leader, that he felt no want of rest, and would rather take on him the office of arousing the other captains to their stations, as the moon, their preconcerted signal, was approaching its setting.

CHAP. VI.

WHEN Kirkpatrick, Murray, and Scrymgeour arrived, to their great admiration, Wallace recounted the exploit of his young soldier; and then described the plans, which the alteration in the point of attack had caused him to make. These being approved, every man withdrew to call up his slumbering followers. In a few minutes they were under arms; and being marshalled according to Wal-

lace's new orders, he led them forward in silence through the water, and along the beach which lay between the rock and the Leven. Arriving at the base just as the moon set, they began to ascend. To do this in the dark, redoubled the difficulty; but as Wallace had the place of every accessible stone accurately described to him by Edwin, he went confidently forward, followed by his Lanerkers.

He and they, being the first to mount, fixed and held the tops of the scaling ladders, while Kirkpatrick and Scrymgeour, with their men, gradually ascended, and gained the height at the bottom of the wall. Here, planting themselves in the fissures of the rock; under the impenetrable darkness of the night (for the moon had not only set, but the stars were obscured by clouds) they awaited the signal of attack.

Meanwhile, Edwin as guide, led Lord Andrew with his followers, and the Fraser men, round by the western side,

to mount the watch-tower rock, and seize the few men who kept the beacon. As a signal of having succeeded, they were to smother the flame on the top of the tower, and then descend towards the garrison, to meet Wallace before the prison of the Earl of Mar.

While the Lanerkers in deadly stillness, with their eyes fixed on the burning beacon, watched with beating hearts the wished-for signal, which was to be that of the attack; Wallace, by the aid of his dagger, which he struck into the firm soil that occupied cracks in the rock, drew himself up, almost parallel with the top of the great wall, which clasped the bases of the two hills. He listened: not a voice was to be heard in the garrison, of all the legions which he had so lately seen glittering on its battlements. It was an awful pause. Now was the moment when Scotland was to make her first essay for freedom; should it fail, ten thousand bolts of iron would be added to her

chains! Should it succeed, liberty and happiness were the almost certain consequences!

He looked up; and fixing his eyes on the beacon-flame, thought he saw the figures of men pass before it—the next moment all was darkness—he sprung on the wall; and feeling by the touch of hands about his feet, that his brave followers had already mounted their ladders; with his sword firmly grasped, he leaped down on the ground within. As he lit on his feet, he struck against the sentinel who was just passing, and by the violence of the shock struck him to the earth; but the man as he fell, catching Wallace round the waist, dragged him after him, and with a vociferous cry shouted *murder*.

Several sentinels ran with levelled pikes to the spot; the adjacent turrets emptied themselves of their armed inhabitants; and fell all on Wallace, just as he had extricated himself from the grasp of the prostrate soldier,

"Who are you?" demanded they.

"Your enemy," was the stern reply; and two fell at his feet with one stroke of his sword.

"Alarm!—Treason!" was the outcry of the rest, as they aimed their random strokes at the conquering chief. But he was now assisted by the vigorous arm of Ker and of several Lanerkers; who, having cleared the wall, were by his side, dealing about blows in the darkness, which filled the air with groans, and strewed the ground with the dying and the dead.

One or two Southrons, whose courage was not equal to their caution, had fled to arouse the garrison; and just as the whole of Wallace's men had leaped the wall and rallied to his support, the inner ballium gate burst open, and a legion of foes, bearing torches, and in battle array, issued forth.—With horrible threatenings they came on; and in one moment surrounded Wallace and his little company.—But his soul brightened in danger;

and his men stood firm with fixed pikes, receiving without injury the assault: their weapons being longer than the enemy's, the Southrons, unconscious of the circumstance, rushed upon their points incurring the death they meant to give. Wallace seeing their disorder, ordered the pikes to be dropped, and his men to charge sword in hand. Terrible was now the havoc; for the desperate Scots, grappling each to his foe with a fatal hold, let not go till the piercing shriek, or the agonizing groan, convinced them that death had seized his victim. Wallace stood in front, making a dreadful passage through the falling ranks, while the tremendous sweep of his sword, flashing in the intermitting light, warned the survivors where the avenging blade would next descend. A horrid vacuity was made in the lately thronged spot:—it seemed not the slaughter of a mortal arm, but as if the destroying angel himself were there; and with one blast of his de-

solating brand, had laid all in ruin. The platform was cleared; and the fallen torches lying, some half extinguished, and others flaming on the ground by the sides of the dead, shewed, by their uncertain gleams, a few terrified wretches seeking safety in flight. The same lurid rays, casting a transitory light on the iron gratings of the great tower, informed Wallace that the heat of conflict had drawn him to the prison of the Earl.

"We are now near the end of this night's work!" cried he: "Let us press forward to give the brave Earl liberty!"

"Liberty, and Lord Mar!" cried Kirkpatrick, rushing onwards. He was immediately followed by his own men; but not so quickly but that the guard in the tower, hearing the outcry, issued from the flanking gates, and surrounding him, took him prisoner.

"If there be might in your arms," roared he with the voice of a lion, "men of Loch Doine, rescue your leader!"

They hurried forward with yells of defiance; but the whole garrison, awakened by the flying wretches from the defeat, turned out all its troops; and, with De Valence himself at their head, taking Kirkpatrick's men in flank, would have overpowered them, had not Wallace, pressing on with his sixty heroes, with desperate determination cut a passage through the closing ranks.

Pikes struck against corslets, swords rung on helmets; and the ponderous battle-axe, falling with the weight of fate, cleft the uplifted target in twain. Blood seemed to pour from every side; and the dripping hands of Kirkpatrick, as Wallace tore him from the grasp of the enemy, proclaimed that he had bathed his vengeance in the very stream. Kirkpatrick on being released, and shaking his ensanguined arms, burst into a horrid laugh: "The work speeds!—Now through the heart of the governor!"

As he spoke, Wallace lost him from

his side again: and again, by the shouts of the Southrons, who cried, "No quarter for the fiend!" he learnt that he was retaken. That merciless cry was the death-bell of their own doom. It directed Wallace to the spot; and throwing himself and his brethren of Lanerk into the midst of the band which held the chief—Kirkpatrick was rescued, and again in his hands. But thousands seemed now to surround him. To do this generous deed, he had advanced farther than he ought; and himself and his brave followers must have been slain, had he not fallen back, and covering their rear with the great tower, all who had the hardihood to approach, fell under the weight of the Scottish sword.

Scrymgeour, at the head of the Loch Doiners and his own men, in vain attempted to reach his surrounded countrymen; and fearful of losing the royal standard, he was turning to make a valiant retreat, when Murray and Edwin,

(having disengaged their men from the precipices of the beacon rock, and guided by the noise of the battle,) rushed into the midst, striking their shields, and uttering the inspiring *slogen* of "Wallace and Freedom!" It was re-echoed by every Scot: those that were flying returned; they who sustained the conflict hailed the cry with braced sinews; and the terrible thunder of the word, pealing from rank to rank, struck a terror into De Valence's men which made them pause.

On that short moment turned the crisis of their fate. Wallace cut his way through the dismayed Southrons; who, hearing the reiterated shouts of the fresh reinforcement, knew not whether its strength might not be thousands instead of hundreds, and panic struck, they became an easy prey to their enemies. Surrounded, mixed with the assailants, they knew not friends from foes; and each individual's thoughts being bent on flight,

they indiscriminately cut to right and left, wounding as many of their own men as of the Scots; and finally, after slaughtering half their companions, some few escaped through the small posterns of the garrison; leaving the inner ballia gate in the possession of the foe.

The whole of the field being now cleared, Wallace ordered the gates of the tower to be forced. But, at the main entrance, resistance was still made. A strong guard was within; and as the assailants drew near, every means were used to render their assault abortive. As the Scots pressed forward to obey their commander, stones and different heavy metals were thrown down upon their heads; but not in the least intimidated, they stood beneath the iron shower, till Wallace ordered them to drive a large beam of wood which lay on the ground, against the hinges of the door;—it burst open—and the whole party rushed into the hall.

A short, sanguinary, but decisive conflict took place. The hauberk and plaid of Wallace were dyed from head to foot: his own brave blood, and the ferocious stream from his enemies, mingled in one horrid hue upon his garments.

"Wallace! Wallace!" cried the stentorian lungs of Kirkpatrick. In a moment Wallace was at his side, and found him struggling with two men. The dagger that would have terminated his existence, was aimed at the very instant in which Wallace laid the holder of it dead across the body of the fallen knight; and catching the other assailant by the throat, he threw him prostrate to the ground.

"Spare me, for the honour of knighthood!" cried the conquered.

"For my honour you shall die!" cried Kirkpatrick, who had extricated himself from the slain, and starting up, almost thrust Wallace from off their supplicating enemy. His sword was already at the

heart of the Englishman. Wallace beat it back. " Hold, Kirkpatrick! He is my prisoner, and I give him his life."

" You know not what you do;" cried the old knight in a fury, and struggling with Wallace to release his sword arm: " This is De Valence! You would not spare our deadliest foe!"

" Yes, even Edward in that position!"

" Even Edward's thanks will await you, noble chief," cried the panting and hard pressed De Valence; " grant but my life!"

" Sooner take my own, Wallace!" cried the determined Kirkpatrick, fixing his foot on the neck of the prostrate earl; and again trying to wrench his right hand from the grasp of his commander.

" By all the powers of mercy, I swear," cried Wallace, " that he shall strike through my heart, who aims a blow at any Southron that I hear beg for quarter. It is their absence we want, not their lives."

"Our safety lies in this earl's destruction!" cried Kirkpatrick; who, enraged at opposition, violently thrust his commander (little expecting such an action,) from off the body of the earl.—De Valence seized his advantage, and catching Kirkpatrick by the limb that pressed on him, overthrew him; and by a sudden spring, turning quickly on Wallace, whom (notwithstanding his clemency) he feared, he struck his dagger into his side.—All this was done in an instant.—Wallace did not fall; but staggering with the weapon sticking in the wound, he was so surprised by the baseness of the deed, that he could not give the alarm till the perpetrator had disappeared.

The flying earl took his course through a narrow passage between the works; and proceeding swiftly along, descended the rock towards the south, where, issuing at one of the outer ballium gates, (that part of the castle being now solitary, as all the

men had been drawn from the walls to the contest within;) he made his escape in a fisher's boat across the Clyde.

Meanwhile, Wallace having recovered himself, just as the Scots brought in lighted torches from the lower apartments of the tower, he saw Sir Roger Kirkpatrick leaning sternly on his blood-dripping sword, and the young Edwin coming forward in garments too near the hue of his own. Andrew Murray was already by his side. Wallace's hand was upon the hilt of the dagger which the ungrateful De Valence had left in his breast.—"You are wounded! you are slain!" cried Murray, in a voice of consternation. Edwin stood motionless with horror.

"That dagger!" exclaimed Scrymgeour.

"Has done nothing," replied Wallace, "but let me a little more blood." As he spoke he drew it out, and thrusting the corner of his scarf into his bosom, stanched the wound.

"So is your mercy rewarded!" exclaimed Kirkpatrick.

"So am I true to my duty," returned Wallace, "though De Valence is a traitor to his!"

"You treated him as a man," replied Kirkpatrick; "but now you find he is a wild beast! and when he next falls into our hands, I hope you will allow me to fulfil my duty in ridding the world of such a monster!"

"Your eagerness, my brave friend," returned Wallace, "has lost him as a prisoner. If not for humanity or honour, for policy's sake, we ought to have spared his life, and detained him as an hostage for our own countrymen in England."

Kirkpatrick, remembering how his violence had released the earl, looked down abashed. Wallace perceiving it, continued—"But let us not abuse our time in discoursing of the coward. He is gone; the fortress is ours; and our first

measure must be to guard it from surprise."

As he spoke his eyes fell upon Edwin, who, having recovered from the shock of Murray's exclamation, was listening with anxiety. "Brave youth!" cried Wallace, beckoning him towards him; "you, who at the imminent risk of your life explored these heights, that you might render our ascent more sure; you, who have fought like a young lion, in this unequal contest; here, in the face of all your valiant comrades, receive that knighthood, which rather derives lustre from your virtues, than gives additional consequence to your name."

Edwin, with a bounding heart bent his knee; and Wallace, giving him the hallowed accolade,(h) the young knight rose from his position with all the roses of his springing fame glowing in his countenance. Scrymgeour presented him the knightly girdle, (i) which he unbraced

from his own loins; and while the happy boy received the sword to which it was attached, he exclaimed with animation: "While I follow the example before my eyes, I shall never draw this in an unjust cause, nor ever sheath it in a just one."

"Go, then;" returned Wallace, smiling an approval of this sentiment; "while work is to be done, I will keep my knight to the toil; go, and with twenty of my Lanerkers, guard the wall by which we ascended. We must not be surprised, where we surprised."

Edwin disappeared in an instant: and Wallace, dispatching detachments to occupy other parts of the garrison, took a torch in his hand, and turning to Murray, proposed to seek the Earl of Mar. Lord Andrew was already at the iron door which led from the hall to the principal stairs.

"We must have our friendly battering ram here!" cried he; "a close prisoner

do they indeed make my uncle, when even the inner doors are bolted on him!"

The men brought the beam, and striking it with all their strength against the iron, it burst open with the noise of thunder.—Shrieks from within followed the sound. The women of Lady Mar, who had not known what to suppose during the uproar of the conflict, now hearing the door forced, instead of being opened in the usual manner, expected nothing less than that some new enemies were advancing, and giving themselves up to despair, they flew into the room where the Countess sat, in equal, though less clamorous terror.

At the first shouts of the Scots, when they began the attack, the Earl had started from his couch.—"That is not peace!" said he; "there is some surprise!"

"Alas, from whom?" returned Lady Mar; "who would venture to attack a

fortress like this, garrisoned with thousands?"

The cry was repeated, with the additional acclamations of—Liberty or Death!

"It is the slogen of Sir William Wallace!" cried he; "I shall be free! O, for a sword!—Hear! hear!"

As the shouts redoubled, and mingling with the various clangors of battle, drew nearer the tower, the impatience of the Earl could not be restrained. Hope and eagerness seemed to have dried up his wounds and new-strung every nerve; unarmed as he was, he rushed from the apartment, and flew down the stairs which led to the iron door. He found it so firmly fastened by bars and padlocks, that it was not to be moved. Again he ascended to his terrified wife; who, conscious of the little obligation Wallace owed to her, dreaded as much to see her husband's hopes realized, as to find herself yet more rigidly the prisoner of the haughty De Valence.

"Joanna!" cried he, "the arm of God is with us.—My prayers are heard; Scotland will yet be free. Hear those groans, those shouts.—Victory! Victory!"

As he thus echoed the cry of triumph, uttered by the Scots as they burst open the outer gate of the tower, and rushed in to the seizure of De Valence, the foundations of the building shook—and Lady Mar, almost in a state of insensibility from terror, received the exhausted body of her husband into her arms: he fainted from an excess of transport his weakened frame was unable to bear. At this instant the panic-struck women (who had all this time been crowded into their own apartments) ran shrieking to their mistress.

The Countess could not speak, but sat pale and motionless, supporting his head on her bosom. Guided by the noise, Lord Andrew flew into the room, and rushing towards his uncle, fell at his feet. "Liberty! Liberty!" was all he could

say. His words pierced the ear of the Earl like a voice from Heaven; and looking up, without a word, he threw his arms around the neck of his nephew.

Tears relieved the contending feelings of the Countess. And the women, recognising the young Lord of Bothwell, retired into a distant corner, well assured that they had now no cause of fear.

The Earl rested but a moment on the panting breast of his nephew: and looking up to seek the mighty leader of the band; he saw Wallace enter, with the firm step of security, and triumph in his eyes.

"Ever my deliverer!" cried the venerable Mar, stretching forth his arms. The next moment he held Wallace to his breast; and remembering all that he had lost for his sake since they parted, a soldier's heart melted, and he burst into tears. "Wallace, my preserver! Thou victim for Scotland and for me— or rather, thou chosen of Heaven! who,

by the sacrifice of all thou didst hold dear on earth, art made a blessing to thy country! receive my thanks and my heart."

Wallace felt all in his soul which the Earl meant to imply; but recovering the calmed tone of his mind before he was released from the embrace of his friend; when he raised himself, and replied to the acknowledgments of the Countess, it was with a serene though glowing countenance.

She, when she had glanced from the eager entrance and action of her nephew, to the advancing hero, looked as Venus did when she beheld the God of War, rise from a field of blood. She started at the appearance of Wallace: but it was not his garments dropping gore, nor the blood-stained faulchion in his hand, that caused the new sensation: it was the figure, breathing youth and manhood; it was the face, where every noble passion of the heart, had stampt themselves on

his perfect features; it was his air, where majesty and sweet entrancing grace mingled in lovely union. They were all these that struck at once upon the sight of Lady Mar, and made her exclaim within herself: "This is a god! This is the hero that is to humble Edward—that is to bless—whom?" was her thought, "Oh! no woman! Let him be a creature enshrined and holy, for no female heart to love!"

This passed through the mind of the Countess in less time than it has been repeated: and when she saw him clasped in her husband's arms, she exclaimed to herself, "Helen, thou wert right; thy gratitude was prophetic of a matchless object; while I, wretch that I am, even whispered to myself, that while I gave the information against my husband, this man, the cause of all, might be secured, and perhaps slain!"

Just as the last idea struck her, Wallace rose from the embrace of his venera-

ble friend, and met the rivetted eye of the Countess. She stammered forth a few expressions of obligation; and Wallace, attributing her confusion to the surprise of the moment, replied to her respectfully; and then turning again to the Earl, briefly related the events of the night.

The good old chieftain's joy was unbounded, when he found that a handful of Scots had put two thousand Southrons to flight, and gained entire possession of the castle. Wallace, having satisfied the anxious questions of his noble auditor, gladly perceived the morning light. He rose from his seat. "I shall take a temporary leave of you, my lord," said he, to the Earl; "I must now visit my brave comrades at their posts; and see that the colours of Scotland are planted on the citadel."

CHAP. VII.

WHEN Wallace withdrew, Lady Mar, who had detained Murray, whispered to him, while a blush stained her cheek, that she should like to be present at the planting of the standard. Lord Mar heard her; and saying that fear of alarming her spirits, by proposing to leave her for even so short a time, had alone prevented his expressing a similar desire; he declared his willingness to accompany her to the spot, and added; "I can be supported thither by the arm of our Andrew; for sorry should I be to be absent from so glorious a sight."

Murray, though eager as themselves to be of the party, yet hesitated. "It will be impossible for my aunt to go: the hall

below, and the ground before the tower, are covered with slain."

"Let them be cleared, then;" said she hastily; "for I cannot consent to be deprived of a spectacle so honourable to my country."

Murray regarded the pitiless indifference with which she gave this order, with amazement: "To do that, madam," said he, "is beyond my power; as the whole ceremony of the colours would be completed long before I could clear the earth of half its bleeding load. I will seek a passage for you by some other way."

Before the Earl could make any remark on this part of the conversation, Murray disappeared; and after exploring the lower part of the tower in unavailing search for a way to the inner ballium, he met Sir Roger Kirkpatrick issuing from a small door, which being in shadow, he had hitherto overlooked. It led through the ballium to the platform be-

fore the citadel. Lord Andrew returned to his uncle and aunt, and informing them of this discovery, gave his arm to Lord Mar, while Kirkpatrick led forward the agitated Countess. As they proceeded, Murray looked behind, and observing her tremble as she walked, he believed that he had wronged his aunt in supposing that her order had been given from inhumanity. Her present agitation was doubtless the effect of a compassionate dread of meeting the objects he had described, and internally he begged her pardon for his hasty aspersion of her heart.

As they approached the citadel, Wallace, having been joined by Sir Alexander Scrymgeour, had already gained the summit. The standard of Edward was yet flying. He looked at it for a moment, and then laying his hand on the staff, "Down, thou red dragon," cried he, "and learn to bow before the Giver of all Victory!" As he spoke, he rent it from the roof;

and casting it over the battlements, planted the Lion of Scotland in its stead.

As the vast evolvements floated on the air, the cry of triumph, the loud clarion of victory, burst from every heart, horn, and trumpet below. It was a shout that pierced the skies, and entered the soul of Wallace with a bliss, which seemed a promise of immortality.

"O God!" cried he, still grasping the staff, and looking up to heaven; "we got not this in possession through our own might; but thy right hand, and the light of thy countenance, overthrew the enemy! Thine the conquest, thine the glory!"

"And thus we consecrate the day to thee, O! power of heaven!" rejoined Scrymgeour: "Let this standard be thine own; and whithersoever we bear it, the result will be victory!"

Wallace dropping on his knee, crossed it with his sword, in token that he subscribed to the vow; and rising again, took

Sir Alexander by the hand: "My brave friend," said he, "we have here planted the tree of freedom in Scotland. Should I die in its defence, swear to bury me under its branches; swear that no enslaved ground shall cover my remains."

"I swear," cried Scrymgeour, laying his crossed hands upon the arm of Wallace; "I swear with a double vow: by the blood of my brave ancestors, whose valour gave me the name I bear; by the cross of Saint Andrew; and by your valiant self; never to sheath my sword, while I have life in my body, until Scotland be free!"

The colours fixed, Wallace and his brave colleague descended the tower; and perceiving the Earl and Countess, who sat on a stone bench at the end of the platform, approached them. The Countess rose as the chiefs drew near: Lord Mar caught his friend by the hand, with a gratulation in his eyes, that was unutterable: his lady spoke, hardly conscious of what

she said; and Wallace, after a few minutes discourse, proposed to the Earl to retire with Lady Mar into the citadel, where she would be more suitably lodged than in the square tower. The Countess returned a ready assent to this proposal, being delighted by such a mark of particular attention from their deliverer; and the Earl was obeying her movement, when suddenly stopping, he exclaimed to Wallace—"But where is that wondrous boy, who, you said, was your pilot over these perilous rocks? Let me give him a soldier's thanks."

Wallace, happy to be so reminded of a pleasure, which had escaped him amidst his pressing duties, beckoned Edwin, who, just relieved from his guard, was standing at some distance. He took him by the hand, and putting it into that of the Earl; "Here," said he, "is my knight of fifteen! and last night he proved himself more worthy of his spurs, than many a man who has received them from the hands of a king."

"He shall wear those of a king;" rejoined the Lord Mar, unbuckling from his feet a pair of golden spurs:—"these were fastened on my heels by our great King Alexander, at the battle of Largs. I had intended them for my only son: but the first knight in the cause of rescued Scotland, doubles that blessing; he is the son of my heart and soul!"

As he spoke he would have prest the young hero to his breast, but Edwin, trembling with emotion, slid down upon his knees, and clasping the Earl's hand to his heart, said, in a hardly audible voice—"Receive and pardon the truant son of your sister Ruthven!"

"What?" exclaimed the veteran, "is it Edwin Ruthven that has brought me this weight of glory?—Come to my arms, thou dearest child of my dearest Janet!"

The uncle and nephew were folded in each others embrace. Lady Mar wept; and Wallace, unable to bear the remembrances which such a scene pressed

upon his heart, turned away towards the battlements. Edwin murmured a short explanation in the ear of his uncle; and then rising from his arms, with his beautiful face glittering like an April day in tears, allowed his gay cousin Murray to buckle the royal spurs on his feet. The rite over, he kissed Lord Andrew's hand in token of acknowledgment, and called on Sir William Wallace to bless the new honours conferred on his knight.

Wallace turned round, and stretching forth his hand to Edwin, with a smile which partook more of heaven than earth, said; "Have we not performed our mutual promises? I brought you to the spot, where you were to reveal your name; and you have declared it to me by the voice of glory!—Come then, my brother, let us leave your uncle awhile, to seek his repose."

As he spoke, he bowed to the Countess; and Edwin joyfully taking his arm, they walked together towards the eastern postern.

The Earl, agitated with the delightful surprise of thus meeting his favourite sister's son, (a child whom he had never seen since its infancy,) and exhausted by the variety of his late emotions, readily acquiesced in a proposal for rest, and leaning on Lord Andrew, proceeded to the citadel.

The Countess had other attractions: lingering at the side of the rough knight of Torthorald, she looked back; and when she saw the object of her gaze disappear through the gates, she sighed; and turning to her conductor, walked by him in silence till they joined her husband in the hall of the keep.—Murray led the way into the apartments lately occupied by De Valence. They were furnished with all the luxury of a Southron nobleman. Lady Mar, with no inconsiderable degree of pleasure, cast her eyes around the splendid chamber, and seated herself on one of its tapestried couches. The Earl, not marking whether it were of silk or

of rushes, placed himself beside her. Murray drew a stool towards them, while Kirkpatrick, tired of his gallant duty, abruptly took his leave.

Lady Mar reclined her thoughtful head upon the arm of the couch, and the Earl laid his hand upon the shoulder of his nephew.

"My dear Andrew," said he, "in the midst of this proud rejoicing for myself and for Scotland, there is yet a canker at my heart. Remove it—and tell me that my beloved Helen, when she disappeared in the tumult at Bothwell, was under your protection?"

"She was;" replied Murray; "and I thank the holy Saint Fillan, she is now in the sanctuary of his church."

Murray then recounted to the Earl the events which had happened to him from the moment of his withdrawing behind the arras, to his confiding the English soldier with the iron box to the care of the prior. Lord Mar sighed heavily when

he spoke of that mysterious casket. "It is well," said he, "that it is safe. Whatever it contain, it has drawn after it much evil and much good. The domestic peace of Wallace was ruined by it, and the spirit which now restores Scotland to herself, was raised by his wrongs!"

"But tell me," added he, "do you think my daughter is safe, so near a garrison of the enemy?"

"Surely, my lord," said the Countess, well remembering the enthusiasm with which Helen had regarded, even the unknown Wallace; "surely you would not bring that tender child into a scene like this! Rather send a messenger to convey her secretly to Thirlestane: there she will be safe under the protection of her grandfather."

The Earl acquiesced in her opinion; and saying that he would consult with Wallace about the securest mode of travel for his daughter, he again turned to Lord Andrew, to learn farther of their late proceedings. But the Countess, uneasy

at this determination, once more interrupted him.

"Alas! my lord, what would you do? His generous zeal will offer to go in person for your daughter. We know not what dangers he may then incur; and surely the champion of Scotland is not to be thrown into peril for any domestic concern!—If you really feel the weight of the evils into which you have plunged Sir William Wallace, do not increase it, by even hinting to him the present subject of your discourse.

"My aunt is an oracle!" resumed Murray. "Allow me to be the happy knight that is to bear the surrender of Dumbarton to my sweet cousin? Prevail on Wallace to remain in this garrison till I return; and then full tilt for the walls of old Stirling, and the downfal of Hughie Cressingham!"

Both the Countess and the Earl were pleased with this arrangement. The latter, by the persuasions of his nephew, retired into an inner chamber to repose; and the

former, desired Lord Andrew to inform Wallace, that she should expect to be honoured with his presence at noon, to partake of such fare as the garrison afforded.—Murray withdrew; and she, calling up some of the soldiers, sent them to the great tower, to bring away her wardrobe; and to conduct her maids, with her infant child, to the citadel. When they arrived, she made every disposition to establish herself quite at home; and gave orders for as magnificent a dinner to be prepared, as could be collected from the full stores of De Valence.

Murray, on coming from the citadel, met Ker, who told him that Wallace, having been the round of all the posts, had proceeded with Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, and Edwin Ruthven, towards the great tower. Lord Andrew followed them thither; and on issuing from the postern which led to that part of the rock, he observed his chief standing with his helmet off in the midst of the slain.

"This is a horrid sight!" said he to Murray, as he approached; "but it shall not long lay thus exposed.—I have just ordered biers to be prepared, by which these sad wrecks of human nature, may be lowered into the Clyde: its rushing stream, will soon carry them to a deeper grave, beneath yon peaceful sea." He then added, that as his own dead amounted to no more than fifteen, he meant to bury them at the foot of the rock: a prisoner in the castle, had described steps in the cliff, by which the solemnity could easily be performed.

"But why, my dear commander," cried Lord Andrew, "why do you take any thought about our enemies? Leave them where they are, and the eagles of our mountains will soon find them graves."

"For shame, Murray!" was the reply of Wallace; "they are dead, and our enemies no more.—They are men like ourselves; and shall we deny them a place in that earth whence we all sprung?

We war not with human nature: are we not rather the assertors of her rights?"

"I know," replied Lord Andrew, blushing; "that I am often the assertor of my own folly; and I do not know how you will forgive my inconsiderate impertinence."

"Because it was inconsiderate;" replied Wallace: "inhumanity is too stern a guest, to live in such a breast as yours."

"If I ever gave her quarters," replied Murray, "I should most wofully disgrace the companion she would meet there. No; next to the honour of fair Scotland, my cousin Helen is the goddess of my idolatry; and she would forswear my love and kindred, could she believe me capable of feeling otherwise than in unison with Sir William Wallace."

Wallace looked towards him with a benign pleasure in his countenance:—"Your sweet cousin does me honour: and William Wallace cannot but be proud of such approbation."

"Ah! my noble friend," cried Murray, lowering his gay tone, to one of softer expression; "if you knew all her goodness; all the amiableness that dwells in her gentle heart, you would indeed esteem her—you would love her as I do."

The blood fled from the cheek of Wallace. "Not as you do, Murray:—I can no more love woman as you do her. Such scenes as these," cried he, turning to the mangled bodies, which the men were now carrying away to the precipice of the Clyde; "have divorced woman's love from my heart.—I am all my country's, or I am nothing."

"Nothing!" reiterated Murray, laying his hand upon that of Wallace, as it rested upon the hilt of his sword on which he leaned: "Is the friend of mankind, the champion of Scotland, the beloved of a thousand valuable hearts, nothing? Nay, art thou not the agent of Heaven to be the scourge of a tyrant? Art thou not the deliverer of thy country?"

Wallace turned his bright eye upon Murray with an expression of mingled feelings:—"May I be all this, my friend, and Wallace will yet be happy!—But speak not to me of love and woman: tell me not of those endearing qualities, which I have prized too tenderly; and which are now buried to me for ever, beneath the ashes of Ellerslie."

Murray looked at him with trepidation: "Not under the ashes of Ellerslie," said he, "sleep the remains of your lovely wife." Wallace's penetrating eye, full of a surprised inquiry, turned quick upon him; Murray continued: "My cousin's pitying soul stretched itself towards them; by her directions they were brought from the oratory in the rock, and deposited, with all holy rites, in the cemetery at Bothwell."

The glow that now animated the before chilled heart of Wallace, over-spread his face. His eyes spoke volumes of gratitude, his lips moved, but his feelings

were too big for utterance, and fervently pressing the hand of Murray; to conceal emotions, ready to shake his manhood, he turned away, and walked towards the cliff. Lord Andrew followed at a short distance; but, that he might not, by his immediate presence, press still farther upon his awakened recollection, he kept far to the right; and joining Edwin Ruthven, assisted him in directing the men in their melancholy duty, of lowering the slain to Sir Alexander Scrymgeour's detachment, which was below, to commit them to the deep.

When all was finished, a young priest in the company of Scrymgeour, gave the funeral benediction, both to the departed in the waves, and those whom the shore received. The rites over, Murray, reascending the rock, again drew near to Wallace, and delivered his aunt's message, which, amidst more interesting matters, he had forgotten. The chief told him, that he had just replied to a messenger

from the Countess; and that he had sent her word he would attend her commands. "We must first," continued he, "visit our wounded prisoners in the tower. There are above three hundred of them, whom Edwin and I discovered amongst the dead."

Murray gladly obeyed the impulse of his leader's arm; and followed by the chiefs who had returned from the late solemn duty, entered the tower. Ireland met them in the porch; and welcomed Wallace with the intelligence, that he hoped he had succoured friends instead of foes; for that most of the prisoners were poor Welsh peasants, whom Edward had torn from their mountains to serve in his legions; and a few Irish, who, in heat of blood, and eagerness for adventure, had inlisted in his ranks. "I have shewn to them," continued Ireland, "what fools they are, thus to injure themselves in us. To the Welsh, I said, they were rivetting their chains, by as-

sisting to extend the dominion of their conqueror :—and to the Irish, I enforced that they were forging fetters for themselves, by lending their help to enslave their brother nation, the free-born Scots. They only require your presence, my lord, to forswear their former leaders, and to inlist under Scottish banners."

"Thou art an able orator, my good Stephen," returned Wallace; "and whatever promises thou hast made to honest men, in the name of Scotland, we are ready to ratify them. Is it not so?" added he, turning to Kirkpatrick and Scrymgeour.

"All, as you will;" replied they in one voice. "Yes;" added Kirkpatrick; "you were the first to rise for Scotland; and who but you has a right to command for her!"

"None other, say I; and I swear it too, by the royal standard I bear!" rejoined Scrymgeour.

"And I," cried Murray, "by all the

standards, royal, loyal, and saintly, between this and the Holy Land! So, dear general, lead us to our recruits."

Ireland threw open the door which led into the hall; and there, on the ground, on pallets of straw, lay most of the wounded Southrons. A few, who were not so much injured as the rest, were assisting the Scots to administer to the others. At sight of Wallace, whom some of their dimmed eyes had discerned when he discovered them expiring on the rock, they uttered such a piercing cry of joyful gratitude, that, surprised, he stood for a moment. In that moment, already five or six of the poor wounded wretches had crawled to his feet:—"Our Enemy!—Our Preserver!" burst from their lips, as they kissed the hem of his garment.

"Not to me, not to me," hastily exclaimed Wallace; "I am a soldier like yourselves; I have only acted a soldier's part:—but I am a soldier of freedom; you, of a tyrant, who seeks to enslave the

world! This makes the difference between us; this lays you at my feet; when I would more willingly, as brothers in one generous cause, receive you to my arms."

"We are yours," was the answering exclamation of those who knelt, and of those who raised their feebler voices from their beds of straw. A few, only, remained silent. Wallace, disengaging himself, with many kind expressions of approbation, from those who clung around him, walked towards the sick, who seemed too ill to speak. While repeating the same consolatory language to them, he observed an old man lying between two young ones, who, unlike the rest, still kept a profound silence. His rough features were marked with many a scar; but there was a meek resignation in his face, that powerfully struck Wallace. As the chief drew near, the veteran raised himself on his arm, and bowed his head with a respectful air. Wallace stopped. "You are an Englishman?"

"I am, sir, and I have no services to offer you. These two young men on each side of me are my sons. Their brother, I lost last night in the conflict. To-day, by your mercy, not only my life is preserved, but my two remaining children also!—Yet, I am an Englishman; and I cannot forswear my country; I cannot be grateful, at the expense of my allegiance."

"Nor would I require it of you," returned Wallace; "these brave Welsh and Irish were brought hither by the oppressor who subjugates their countries; they owe him no duty. But you are a free subject of England; he that is a tyrant over others, can only be your King: he must be the guardian of your laws, the defender of your liberties, or his sceptre falls. Having sworn to follow a sovereign so plighted, I am not severe enough to condemn you, because, misled by that phantom which he calls glory,

you have suffered him to betray you into unjust conquests."

"Once I have been so misled;" returned the old man; "but never again. Fifty years I have fought under the British standard in Normandy and in Palestine; and now, in my old age, with four sons, I followed the armies of my sovereign into Scotland. My eldest I lost in the plains of Dunbar. My second fell last night; and my two youngest are now by my side: you have saved them and me. What can I do? Not, as your noble self says, forswear my country: but this I swear; and in the oath, do you my sons join; (as he spoke they laid their crossed hands upon his, in token of assent) never to raise our swords against England; and, with like faith, never to lift an arm against Sir William Wallace or the cause of injured Scotland!"

"To this, we also subjoin!" cried several other men, who comprised the whole of the English prisoners.

"Noble people!" cried Wallace; "why have you not a king worthy of you!"

"And yet," said Kirkpatrick, in a surly tone; angry with Wallace, for expressing such admiration of his enemies; and at himself, for feeling some sympathy with the scene; "Heselrigge was one of these people!" Wallace turned upon him with a look of such tremendous meaning, that, awed by an expression too mighty for him to comprehend, he fell back a few paces, muttering something that was not heard."

"That man would arouse the tiger, in our lion-heart ed chief!" whispered Scrymgeour to Murray.

"Ay;" returned he, "but the royal spirit keeps the wild beast in awe:—see how coweringly that bold brow now bows before it!"

Wallace marked the impression his glance had made; and where he had struck, being unwilling to pierce also, he

dispelled the thunder from his countenance, and once more looking on Sir Roger with a frank serenity; "Come," said he, "my good knight; you must not be more tenacious for William Wallace, than he is for himself! While he possesses such a zealous friend as Kirkpatrick of Torthorald, he need not now fear the arms of a thousand Heselriggs."

"No, nor of Edwards neither!" cried Kirkpatrick, once more looking boldly up, and shaking his broad claymore:—"My thistle has a point to sting all to the death, who pass between this arm, and my leader's breast."

"May Heaven long preserve the valiant Wallace!" was the prayer of every feeble voice, as the chieftain left the hall to visit his own wounded, who were in an upper chamber. The interview was short and satisfactory. He found the young Edwin ministering to them with the tenderness of a son. Dugald, whom he had deputed to superintend their recovery,

gave him a cheering account of their state; and as all who were wounded, belonged to Wallace's own particular band, he promised that he and Edwin would return in the evening to the tower, and make it their lodging. The poor fellows, with overflowing hearts, thanked him for this condescension—" Ah! sir," said one of them, " I cannot tell how it is, but when I see you, I feel as if I beheld the very soul of my country, or its guardian angel, standing before me;—a something I cannot describe, but it fills me with courage and comfort!"

" You see an honest Scot, standing before you, my good Duncan;" replied Wallace; " and that is no mean personage; for it is one who knows no use of his life, but as it fulfils his duty to his country?"

" O! that the sound of that voice could penetrate to every ear in Scotland?" rejoined the soldier; " it would

be more than the call of a trumpet, to bring them to the field!"

"And from the summit of this rock, many have already heard it; and more shall be aroused!" cried Murray, returning from the door, to which one of his men had beckoned him: "Here is a man come to announce to Sir William Wallace, that Malcolm, Earl of Lennox, passing by the foot of this rock, saw the Scottish standard flying from its citadel; and as amazed as overjoyed at the sight, has sent to request the favour of being admitted."

"Let me bring him hither!" interrupted Kirkpatrick; "he is brave as the day, and will be a noble auxiliary."

"Every true Scot, must be welcome to these walls," returned Wallace.

Kirkpatrick hastened from the tower, and taking with him a few followers, rapidly passed through the different gates, till he reached the northern side; where,

at the foot of the rock, stood the earl and his train. Sir Roger, with all the pride of a freeman and a victor, descended the height. The earl advanced to meet him. "What is it I see? Sir Roger Kirkpatrick master of this citadel; and our king's colours flying from its towers! Where is Earl De Valence? Where the English garrison?"

"The English garrison," replied Kirkpatrick, "are now, twelve hundred men, beneath the waters of the Clyde. De Valence has fled; and this fortress, manned with a few hardy Scots, will sink into the waves, sooner than again see the English dragon on its walls."

"And you, noble knight!" cried Lennox, "have achieved all this. You are the dawn to a blessed day for Scotland!"

"No;" replied Kirkpatrick; "I am but a follower of the man who inspires us all. Sir William Wallace of Ellerslie, is our chief; and, with the power of

his virtues, he subdues not only friends, but enemies, to his command."

He then narrated to the earl, the happy events of the last four and twenty hours. He listened with wonder and joy. "What!" cried he, "so noble a plan for Scotland, and I ignorant of it?—I, that have not waked nor slept, day or night for many a month, without thinking or dreaming of some enterprise to free my country:—and behold it is achieved in a moment!—I see the stroke as a bolt from Heaven; and I pray Heaven it may light the sacrifice throughout the nation!

"Lead me, worthy knight, lead me to your chief; for he shall be mine too: he shall command Malcolm Lennox and all his clan."

Kirkpatrick gladly turned to obey him; and mounting the ascent together, within the Barbican gate, which was thrown open to receive the expected guest, stood Wallace, with Scrymgeour, Murray, and Edwin. The earl knew Scrymgeour

well, having often seen him in the field, as hereditary standard-bearer of the kingdom; of the persons of the others, he was ignorant.

"There is Wallace!" exclaimed Kirkpatrick.

"Surely not one of those very young men?" interrogated the earl.

"Even so;" was the answer of the knight; "but his is the youth of the brave son of Ammon; grey-beards are glad to bow before his golden locks; for beneath them is a wisdom, which makes even the aged tremble."

As he spoke they entered the barbacan; and Wallace (whom the penetrating eye of Lennox had already singled out for the chief) advanced to meet his guest.

"Earl," said he, "you are welcome to Dumbarton castle."

"Bravest of my countrymen!" returned Lennox, clasping him in his arms; "receive a soldier's embrace; receive the gratitude of a loyal heart!

accept my services, my arms, my men: my all, I devote to Scotland and the great cause."

Wallace, for a moment, did not answer; but warmly straining the earl to his breast, said, as he released him, "Such support will give sinews to our power. A few months, and, with the blessing of that arm which has already mowed down the ranks which opposed us, we shall see Scotland at liberty."

"And may Heaven, brave Wallace!" exclaimed Lennox, "grant us thine arm to wield its scythe! But how have you accomplished this? How have your few managed to overcome the English thousands?"

"He strikes home, when right points his sword;" replied Wallace: "the injuries of Scotland were my guide, and justice my companion. We feared nothing, for God was with us; we feared nothing, and in His might we conquered."

"And shall yet conquer!" cried Len-

nox, kindling with the enthusiasm that blazed from the eyes of Wallace; "I feel the strength of our cause; and from this hour I devote myself to assert it or to die."

"Not to die! my noble lord;" said Murray; "we have yet many an eve, to dance over the buried fetters of Scotland. And as a beginning of our jollities, I must remind our general to lead you to the board of my beauteous aunt; else, we shall most grievously sin against the only lady in the castle."

Lord Lennox, understood from this address, that it was the brave Murray who spoke to him; for he had heard sufficient from Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, to explain to him how the Countess of Mar and her patriot husband came within its walls.

The Countess, who impatiently expected her deliverer, and who, after the business of her toilet, had counted every moment in each passing hour, as so many

ages; with an emotion at her heart which made it bound against her bosom, saw the object of her wishes advancing along the platform. All others were lost to her, as in a mist: and hastily rising from the window as the chiefs entered the porch, she crossed the room to meet them at the door. The Earl of Mar observing her hurried step, inquired whether they were their brave friends who approached. The Countess, in her haste, returned no answer; but entering the anti-room, met Wallace and his party just as they had ascended the stairs.

The Earl of Lennox stood amazed, at the sight of so much beauty and splendour in such a scene. Lady Mar had hardly attained her thirty-fifth year; but from the graces of her person, and the address with which she set forth all her charms, there was a dazzling fascination about her, which so bewildered the faculties of the gazer, that he found it impossible to suppose her more than three or four and

twenty. Thus happily formed by nature, and habited in a suit of velvet, overlaid with Cyprus-work of gold; blazing with jewels about her head, and her feet clad in silver-fretted sandals; Lennox rather thought that it was some triumphant queen he was going to salute, than a wife who had so lately shared captivity with an outlawed husband. Murray started at such unexpected magnificence in his aunt. But Wallace, having his mind fully possessed with more weighty matters, scarcely observed that it was any thing unusual; and bowing to her as he advanced, presented the Earl of Lennox. She smiled, and saying a few words of welcome to the earl, gave her hand to Wallace to lead her back into the room.

Lord Mar had risen from his seat; and leaning on his sword, (for his warlike arm refused any other staff) he stood up on their entrance. At the sight of Lord Lennox he uttered an ex-

clamation of glad surprise. Lennox embraced him:—"I too am come to inlist under the banners of this young Leonidas."

"God armeth the patriot!" was all the reply that Mar made, as the big tears rolled over his cheek, and he shook him by the hand. "I have four hundred stout Lennox-men," continued the earl, "who by to-morrow's eve shall be ready to follow our leader to the very borders."

"Not so soon;" interrupted the Countess; "our deliverer needs repose. His men are wounded and weary, and he cannot stir till all be recovered."

"I thank your benevolence, Lady Mar;" returned Wallace; "but the issue of last night, and the sight of Lord Lennox this day, with the promise of so great a support, are the best aliments for me. My men I can leave in comfort in this garrison; and to-morrow, or next day, I must march hence."

"Ay, to be sure;" joined Kirkpa-

trick; "Dumbarton was not taken during a sleep:—and if we stay loitering here, the devil that holds Stirling castle may follow the scent of De Valence's track; and so I lose my revenge!"

"What?" said the Countess, "and are my lord and I to be left here alone, again to fall into the hands of our enemies? Sir William Wallace I should have thought"—

"Every thing, madam," rejoined he, "that is demonstrative of my devotion to your venerable lord!—I quit not this, nor any other place, whilst the danger of himself, or of any dear to him, requires my stay. But with a brave garrison, I hope you will consider yourself safe here, until a wider range of security be won, to enable you to retire to Braemar."

As the apostrophe addressed to Wallace, in the latter part of the Countess's speech, had been said to himself in rather a low voice, his reply was made in a similar tone; so that Lord Mar, who

was discoursing with the Earl of Lennox, did not hear any part of the answer but the concluding words.—"What!" said he, "is my ever fearful Joanna making objections to keeping garrison here?"

"I confess," replied Wallace, "that an armed citadel is not the most pleasant abode for a lady; but at present, excepting, perhaps, the protection of the church, it is the safest; and I would not advise your lady to remove hence, until the plain be made as free as this mountain."

The sewer now announced that the board was spread in the hall; and the Countess leading the way, reluctantly gave her hand to the Earl of Lennox. Lord Mar leaned on the arm of Wallace; and was followed by Edwin and the other chieftains.

CHAP. VIII.

DURING the repast, the Countess fixed her insatiate eyes on the manly yet youthful countenance of the heroic Wallace. His plumed helmet was now laid aside; and the heavy corslet unbuckled from his breast, disclosed the symmetry of his fine form, and left its graceful movements to be displayed with advantage, by the flexible folds of his simple tartan vest. It was a warrior she looked on: the formidable Wallace, bathed in the blood of Heselrigge, and breathing vengeance against the adherents of the tyrant Edward! It was the enemy, then, of her kinsmen of the house of Cummin! it was the man, for whom her husband had embraced so many dangers: it was the man, whom she had denounced to one of those kinsmen, and whom she had betrayed to the

hazard of an ignominious death! Where now was the fierce rebel, the ruiner of her peace, the outlaw whom she had wished in his grave!

The idea was distraction:—she could have fallen at his feet, and bathing them with her tears, have implored his pity and forgiveness. Even as the wish sprung in her mind, she asked herself—Did he know all, could he pardon such a weight of injuries? She cast her eyes with a wild expression upon his face. The mildness of heaven was there; and the peace too, she might have thought, had not his eye, which was turned to the discourse of Lord Mar, carried a chastened sadness in its look, which told that something dire and sorrowful was buried deep within. It was a look that dissolved the soul which gazed on it. The Countess felt her heart throb violently. At that moment Wallace addressed a few words to her, but she knew not what they were; her soul was in tumults, and a

mist passed over her sight, which for a moment seemed to wrap all her senses in a trance.

The unconscious object of these emotions, bowed to her inarticulate reply; supposing, that the mingling voices of others had made him hear her's indistinctly: and not observing her changing complexion, he again turned to the conversation of the earls.

Lady Mar found her situation so strange, and her agitation so inexplicable, that, feeling it impossible to remain longer without giving way to a burst of tears, for which she could not have accounted, she rose from her seat, and forcing a smile, curtsied to the company and left the room.

When she gained the upper state-apartments, she threw herself along the nearest couch, and striking her breast with a strong emotion, exclaimed, "What is this that is within me? How does my soul seem to pour itself out to this man! Oh!

how does it extend itself, as if it would absorb his, even at my eyes! Only twelve hours—hardly twelve hours, have I seen this William Wallace, and yet my very being is now lost in his!"

As she spoke, she covered her face with her handkerchief; but no tears now started to be wiped away. The fire in her veins dried their source; and with beating temples and burning blushes she rose from her seat. "Fatal, fatal hour! Why didst thou come here, too lovely Wallace, to rob me of my peace? O! why did I ever look on that face?—or rather, blessed saints!" cried she, clasping her hands in wild passion, "why did I ever shackle this hand by giving it to a man old enough to have been my father;—why did I ever render such a sacrifice necessary? Wallace is now free, had I been free! Powers of Heaven," cried she, "grant me patience to bear all that is pressing on this heart!" She gasped for breath, and again seating

herself, reclined her head against the tapestry.

She was now silent; but thoughts, not less intense, not less fraught with self-reproach and anguish, occupied her mind. Should this god of her idolatry, ever discover that it was her information which had sent Earl de Valence's men to surround him in the mountains; should he ever learn that at Bothwell, she had betrayed the cause on which he had set his life; she felt that moment would be her last. For now, to sate her eyes with gazing on him, to hear the sound of his voice, to receive his smiles, seemed to her a joy which she could only surrender with her existence. What then was the prospect of so soon losing him, even to crown himself with honour, but to her a living death!

To defer this departure was all her study, all her hope; and fearful that his restless valour might urge him, as he seemed bent on new encounters, to ac-

company Murray in his intended convoy of Helen into Tweed dale, she determined to persuade her nephew to set off without the knowledge of his general. She did not allow, that it was the youthful beauty, and more lovely mind of her daughter-in-law, which she feared; she cloaked her alarm under the plausible excuse, even to herself, of care for the chieftain's safety. Composed by this arrangement, her disturbed features became smooth; and having adjusted her disordered tresses at the mirror; with a sedate air she received her lord and his brave friends, who entered the room.

But two did not appear. Wallace had taken Lord Lennox to view the dispositions of the fortress; but they had promised the Earl, to return in the course of an hour. Ill satisfied as she was with this prolonged absence, she yet determined to turn it to advantage, and employ that time in drawing Murray to her purpose. While her lord and his friends

were examining a draft of Scotland, which Wallace had sketched since she left the banquetting-room, the Countess took Lord Andrew aside and conversed with him on the subject nearest her heart. Murray granted the cogency of her reasons against betraying their deliverer into sharing the danger of so domestic an affair.

"It certainly belongs to me alone, as her kinsman and her friend;" said he; "but, my good lady, I cannot comprehend why I am to lead my fair cousin such a pilgrimage. She is not afraid of heroes! You are safe in Dumbarton; and why not bring her here also?"

"Not for worlds!" exclaimed the Countess, thrown off her guard. Murray looked at her with surprise. It recalled her to self-possession, and she resumed. "So lovely a creature in this castle, would be a dangerous magnet. You must have known that it was the hope of obtaining her, which attracted the Lord

Soulis and Earl de Valence to Bothwell. The whole castle wrung with the quarrel of these two lords upon her account, when you so fortunately effected her escape. Should she be known to be here, the same fierce desire of obtaining her, would add double fire to the arms of De Valence in attempting the recovery of this place; and so, perhaps, her father and this brave garrison might fall a sacrifice to our imprudence, in bringing her hither."

Murray was persuaded by this argument to relinquish the idea of conveying her to Dumbarton; but remembering what Wallace had said respecting the safety of a religious sanctuary, he told his aunt, that he never would seriously consent to expose his cousin to the present perils of a journey to the banks of the Leeder; and therefore he advised, that she should be left in quiet at St. Fillans, till the cause of Scotland was more firmly established: "Send a messenger to inform

her of the rescue of Dumbarton, and of your and my uncle's health;" continued he; "and that will be sufficient to make her happy!"

That she was not to be thrown in Wallace's way, satisfied Lady Mar: and indifferent whether Helen's seclusion were under the Eildon tree,(k) or the Holyrood, she approved Murray's decision, and dismissed the subject. Relieved from apprehension, her face was again dressed in smiles; and with a bounding heart she welcomed the re-entrance of Wallace with the Earl of Lennox.

Absorbed in one wish, every charm she possessed was directed to the same point. She played finely on the lute, and sung with all the grace of her country. What gentle heart was not to be affected by music? She determined that it should be one of the spells by which she meant to attract Wallace to think on her, and to bind him to the castle. She took up one of the lutes (which with

other musical instruments decorated the apartments of the luxurious De Valence,) and touching it with exquisite delicacy, breathed the most pathetic air her memory could dictate.

"If on the heath she moved, her breast was whiter
than the down of Cana;
If on the sea-beat shore, than the foam of the rolling
ocean.
Her eyes were two stars of light. Her face was heaven's bow in showers.
Her dark hair flowed around it, like the streaming
clouds.
Thou wert the dweller of souls, white-handed Strinadona!"

Wallace rose from his chair, which she had placed near her. She had designed that these tender words of the bard of Morven, should suggest to her hearer, the observation of her own resembling beauties. But he saw in them only the lovely *dweller of his own soul:* and walking towards a window, stood there, with his eye fixed on the descending sun:

"So has set all my joys: so is life to me, a world without a sun; cold, cold, and charmless!"

The Countess, who vainly believed that some sensibility advantageous to her new passion, had caused the agitation with which she saw him depart from her side, ran through many a melodious descant; till, touching on the first strains of *Thusa ha measg na reultan mor;* she saw Wallace start from his contemplative position, and with a pale countenance leave the room. There was something in his countenace which excited the alarm of the Earl of Lennox, who had been listening to the songs: he arose instantly, and overtaking the chief at the threshold, inquired what was the matter?

"Nothing," answered Wallace, forcing a smile, in which the agony of his mind was too truly imprinted; "but music displeases me." With this reply he disappeared. The excuse seemed strange,

but it was true; for her, whose notes were to him sweeter than the thrush; whose angel strains used to greet his morning and evening hours, was silent in the grave! He should no more see her *white-hand* upon the lute! He should no more behold that bosom, brighter than *foam upon the wave*, heave in tender transport at his applause!" What then was music to him? A soul-less sound; or a direful knell, to recal the remembrance of all he had lost.

Such were his thoughts, when the words of *Thusa ha measg* rung from Lady Mar's voice. Those were the strains which Halbert used to breathe from his harp, to call his Marion to her nightly slumbers:—those were the strains with which that faithful servant had announced that she slept to awake no more!

What wonder then that Wallace fled from the apartment, and buried himself and his aroused grief, in the solitudes of the beacon-hill!

Edwin, while looking over the shoulder of his uncle, on the station which Stirling held amid the Oichel hills, had, at intervals, cast a side-long glance upon the changing complexion of his general; and no sooner did he see him hurry from the room, than fearful of some disaster having befallen the garrison, (which Wallace did not chuse to mention publicly,) he also left the apartment.

After seeking the object of his anxiety for a long time without avail, he was returning on his steps, when attracted by the splendours of the moon which silvered the beacon-hill, he ascended; once, at least, to tread that acclivity in light, which he had so miraculously passed in darkness. Scarce a breeze seemed to fan the sleeping air:—he moved on with a flying step, till a deep sigh arrested him. He stopped and listened: it was repeated again and again. He approached the spot, and by the side of a stone he saw a human figure reclined. The head of the

apparent mourner was unbonnetted and the brightness of the moon shone on his polished forehead. Edwin thought that the sound of those sighs was the same that he had often heard from the breast of Wallace; and he no longer doubted having found the object of his search. He walked forward. Again the figure sighed; but with a depth so full of piercing woe, that Edwin hesitated.

A cloud passed over the moon; and sailing off again, displayed to the anxious boy that he stood directly before his friend. "Who goes there?" exclaimed Wallace, starting on his feet.

"Your Edwin," returned the youth. "I feared something wrong had happened, when I saw you look so sad and leave the room abruptly."

Wallace pressed his hand in silence, and stood looking on the ground. "Then some evil has befallen you?" inquired Edwin, in an agitated voice; "you do not speak!"

Wallace reseated himself on the stone, and leaned his head upon the hilt of his sword. " No new evil has befallen me, Edwin. But there is such a thing as remembrance, that stabs deeper than the dagger's point."

" What remembrance can wound you, my general?—The Abbot of St. Columba has often told me, that memory is a balm to all ills with the good: and have not you been good to all? The benefactor, the preserver of thousands!—Surely if man can be happy, it must be Sir William Wallace!"

" And so I am, my Edwin, when I contemplate the end. But in the interval, with all thy sweet philosophy, is it not written here " that man was made to mourn?" He pressed his hand to his breast; and after a short pause resumed: —" Doubly I mourn, doubly am I bereaved; for, had it not been for enemies, more fell than those which beguiled Adam of Paradise, I might have been a

father, I might have lived to have gloried in a son like thee; I might have seen my wedded angel clasp such a blessing to her bosom: but now, both are cold in clay! —These are the recollections, which sometimes draw tears down thy general's cheeks. And do not believe, brother of my soul, (said he, pressing the now weeping Edwin to his breast) that they disgrace his manhood. The Son of God wept over the tomb of his friend; and shall I deny a few tears, dropped in stealth over the grave of my wife and child!"

Edwin sobbed aloud: "No son could love you dearer than I do—Ah, let my duty, my affection, teach you to forget you have lost a child. I will replace all to you, but your Marion; and she, the pitying Son of Mary, will restore to you in the kingdom of Heaven."

Wallace looked stedfastly at the young preacher. "*Out of the mouths of babes we shall hear wisdom!* Thine, dear Ed-

win, I will lay to heart. Thou shalt comfort me, when my hermit-soul shuts out all the world besides."

"Then I am indeed your brother!" cried the happy youth; "admit me but to your heart; and no fraternal, no filial tie, shall be more strongly linked than mine."

"What tender affections I can spare from those resplendent regions," answered Wallace, pointing to the skies, "are thine. The fervours of my once ardent soul, are Scotland's, or I die.—But thou art too young, my brother," added he, interrupting himself, "to understand all the feelings, all the seeming contradictions of my contending heart."

"Not so;" answered Edwin, with a modest blush: "What was Lady Marion's, you now devote to Scotland. The blaze of those affections which were her's, would consume your being, did you not pour it forth on your country. Were you not

a patriot, grief would prey upon your life."

"You have read me, Edwin;" replied Wallace; "and that you may never love to idolatry, learn this also. Though Scotland lay in ruin, I was happy:—I felt not captivity in Marion's arms: even oppression was forgotten when she made the sufferers' tears cease to flow. She absorbed my wishes, thoughts, and life;—and she was wrested from me, that I might feel myself a slave; that the iron might enter into my soul, with which I was to pull down tyranny, and free my country. Mark my sacrifice, young man;" cried Wallace, starting on his feet; "it even now smokes—and the flames are here inextinguishable!" He struck his hand upon his breast. "Never love as I have loved; and you may be a patriot, without tasting of my bitter cup!"

Edwin trembled: his tears were check-

ed. "I can love none better than I do you, my general! and is there any crime in that?"

Wallace in a moment recovered from the transient wildness that had possessed him: "None, my Edwin;" replied he; "the affections are never criminal, but when by their excess, they blind us to superior duties. The offence of mine, is judged; and I bow to the penalty. When the expiation is made; then may my ashes sleep in rescued Scotland!—and God will grant the seraph spirits of my wife and infant, to waft me in their arms to Paradise." Edwin wept afresh. "Cease, dear boy!" said he; "these presages are very comforting; they whisper, that the path of glory leads thy brother to his home." As he spoke, he put the arm of the silent Edwin (whose sensibility locked up the powers of speech) through his; and drawing him gently forward, they descended the hill together.

On the platform, before the great tow-

er, they were met by Murray. "I come to seek you," cried he: "we have had woe on woe in the citadel, since you left it."

"Nothing very calamitous," returned Wallace, "if we may guess by the merry visage of our embassador."

"Only a little whirlwind of my aunt's; in which we have had airs and showers, enough to wet us through and blow us dry again."

The conduct of the lady was even more extravagant than her nephew chose to describe. On Wallace quitting Lennox at the room door, the earl, instead of returning to the Countess, joined Lord Mar at the table. While conversing with the chiefs who surrounded it, he repeated a discourse he had held with Wallace during his walk over the fortress; and he mentioned, that in consequence, he had sent off Ker with credentials into Lennox, to collect and bring to the castle, four hundred fighting men. "When they arrive,"

said he, "(which we expect will be to-morrow,) it is our commander's intention to march immediately for Stirling; whither, he supposes, Aymer de Valence may have fled. I shall be left here, to relieve you, Lord Mar, from the severer duties attendant on being governor of this place."

No sooner did these words reach the ears of the Countess, (whose vanity had received a most disappointing mortification in the avowal of Wallace, that so far from being wrapt in her music, he was running from it,) than she was struck with despair; and hastening towards her husband, she exclaimed—"You will not suffer this?"

"No;" returned the Earl, mistaking her meaning; "not being able to perform the duties attendant on the station with which Wallace would honour me, I shall relinquish them altogether to Lord Lennox; and be happy to find myself under his protection."

"Ah, where is there protection without Sir William Wallace?" exclaimed she: "If he go, the enemy will return: Who then will repel them from these walls? Who will defend myself, and your only son, from falling again into the hands of our doubly incensed foes?"

Mar observed Lord Lennox colour at this imputation on his bravery; and shocked at the pain which his unreflecting wife gave to so gallant an officer, he hastily replied; "Though I cannot be strong in your defence, yet the Earl of Lennox is an able representative of our chief."

"I will die, madam," interrupted Lennox, "before any thing hostile approaches you or your child."

She attended slightly to this assurance; and again addressed her lord, with fresh arguments for the detention of Wallace; Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, who heard her with impatience, at last abruptly said, "Our Samson was not brought into the

world to keep guard over ladies: and I hope he will be wiser than allow himself to be tied to the girdle of any woman living."

The brave old Earl was offended with this roughness; but ere he could so express himself, his lady darted on Kirkpatrick an angry glance, and having given him a severe retort, she turned again to her husband, and with two or three hysterical sobs, exclaimed—"It is well seen what will be my fate when Wallace is gone! Would he have stood by, and beheld me thus insulted!"

Lord Mar, distressed with shame at her conduct; and anxious to remove her absurd fears, softly whispered her, and threw his arm about her waist.—She thrust him from her:—"You care not what may become of me; and my heart disdains your blandishments."

Lennox, who ceased to be offended with the woman whose unreasonable pertinacity

he despised, rose in silence, and walked to the other end of the room.—Sir Roger Kirkpatrick followed him, muttering, pretty audibly, his thanks to St. Andrew, that he had never been yoked with a wife. —Scrymgeour and Murray tried to allay the storm in her bosom, by circumstantially describing to her, how the fortress would be as safe under the care of Lennox as of Wallace; but they discoursed in vain; she was obstinate, and at last left the room in a passion of tears.

On the return of Wallace, Lord Lennox advanced to meet him:—"What shall we do, General?" said he: "Without you have the power of Hercules, and can be in two places at once; I fear we must either leave the rest of Scotland to fight for itself, or never restore peace to this castle!"

Wallace smiled; but before he could answer, Lady Mar, having heard his voice ascending the stairs, suddenly entered the room.—She held her infant in

her arms.—Her air was composed, but her eyes yet shone in tears.—At this sight, Lord Lennox, taking Murray by the arm, withdrew with him out of the apartment.

She approached Wallace: "You are come, my deliverer, to speak comfort to the mother of this poor babe.—My cruel lord here, and the Earl of Lennox, say you mean to abandon us in this castle?"

"It cannot be abandoned," returned the chief, "while they are in it.—But if so warlike a scene alarms you, would not a religious sanctuary——"

"Not for worlds!" cried she, interrupting him; "what altar is held sacred by the enemies of our country!—No;—wonder not," added she, putting her face to that of her child, "that I should wish this innocent babe never to be from under the wing of such a protector."

"But that is impossible, Joanna," rejoined the Earl; "Sir William Wallace has duties superior to that of keeping

guard over any private family. His presence is wanted in the field; and we should be traitors to the cause, did we detain him."

"Unfeeling Mar!" cried she, weeping bitterly; "thus to echo the words of the barbarian Kirkpatrick; thus to condemn us to die!—You will see another tragedy; your own wife and child, seized by the returning Southrons, and laid bleeding at your feet!"

Wallace walked from her much agitated.

"Rather inhuman Joanna," whispered Lord Mar to her, in an angry voice; "to make such a reference in the presence of our protector!—I cannot stay to listen to a pertinacity that is as insulting to the rest of our brave leaders, as it is oppressive to Sir William Wallace. Edwin, you will come for me when your aunt consents to be guided by right reason." As he spoke, he entered the passage that led to his own apartment.

Lady Mar sat a few minutes silent.—She was not to be warned from her determination, by the displeasure of a husband, whom she now regarded with the impatience of a bond-woman towards her task-master; and only solicitous to compass the detention of Sir William Wallace, for at least a sufficient length of time to make some impression on his heart; an impression which she did not despair of effecting, (as she believed that sensibility like his, could not remain long without recurring to the delights of female tenderness;) she resolved, if he would not remain at the castle, to persuade him to conduct her to her husband's territories in the Isle of Bute. The journey she would contrive, should occupy more than one day; and for holding him longer, she would trust to chance and her own inventions.

With these resolutions she looked up.—Edwin was speaking to Wallace.—"What does he tell you?" said she,

" that my lord has left me in displeasure?—Alas! he comprehends not a mother's anxiety for her sole remaining child.—-One of my sweet twins, my dear daughter, died on my being brought a prisoner to this horrid fortress; and to lose this also, would be more than I could bear.—Look at this babe," cried she, rising and holding it up to him; " let it plead to you for its life!—Guard it, noble Wallace, whatever may become of me!"

The appeal of a mother, made instant way to Sir William's heart; even her weaknesses, did they point to a too tender anxiety respecting her offspring, were sacred with him:—" What would you have me do, my dear madam?—If you fear to remain here, tell me where you think you would be safer, and I will be your conductor?"

She paused, to repress the triumph with which this proposal filled her, and then, with downcast eyes, replied:—" In the sea-girt Bute, stands Rothsay, a rude,

but strong castle of my lord's; it possesses nothing to attract the notice of the enemy; and there I might remain, amongst the poor fishermen of the isles, in perfect safety.—Lord Mar may keep his station here, until a general victory sends you, noble Wallace, to restore my child to his father."

Wallace bowed his assent to her proposal; and Edwin, remembering the Earl's injunction, inquired if he might go and inform him of what was decided.—As he left the room, Lady Mar rose, and suddenly putting her son into the arms of Wallace:—"Let his sweet caresses thank you." Wallace trembled violently as she pressed its little mouth to his; and she, mistranslating this emotion, dropped her face upon the infant's; and so, while she affected to kiss him, rested her head upon the bosom of the chief. There was something in this action more than maternal: it surprised and disconcerted Wallace. "Madam,"

said he, drawing back, and relinquishing the child, " I do not require any thanks, for serving the wife and son of Lord Mar."

At that moment the Earl entered. Lady Mar flattered herself that the repelling action of Wallace, and his cold answer, had arisen from the expectation of his entrance; and seating herself, though covered with the crimson hue of something like disappointment, in a few words she informed her husband, that Bute was to be her future sanctuary.

Lord Mar approved it; but declared his determination to accompany her: " In my state I can be of little use here;" said he; " you will require some protection even in that seclusion; and therefore, leaving Lord Lennox sole governor of Dumbarton, I shall unquestionably attend you to Rothsay."

The Countess, aware that this would break in upon the lonely conversations she meditated to have with Wallace,

objected to the proposal. But none of her arguments being admitted by her husband, and, as Wallace did not support them by a word, she was obliged to make a merit of necessity, and consent to Lord Mar's being the guardian of her new abode.

CHAP. IX.

LATE in the next day, Ker not only returned with the Earl of Lennox's men; but brought with him Sir Eustace Maxwell of Carlaveroch, a brave knight, who, (having been in the neighbourhood, the night that De Valence fled before the arms of Wallace across the Clyde,) no sooner saw the Scottish colours on the walls of Dumbarton, than finding out who was their planter, his soul took fire; and stung with a generous ambition of

equalling in glory his equal in years, he determined to assist, while he emulated the victor.

To this end he went into the town of Dumbarton, and along the shore, striving to lighten the understandings of the deceived, and to excite the discontented to revolt. With most he failed. Some took upon them to lecture him on *fishing in troubled waters ;* and warned him, if he would keep his head on his shoulders, to wear his yoke in peace. Others thought the project too arduous for men of small means: they wished well to the arms of Sir William Wallace; and would watch the moment, should he continue successful, to aid him with all their little power. Those who had any property remaining, feared to risk the loss of all, by embracing a doubtful struggle for the rest. Some were too great cowards to fight for the rights they would gladly regain by the exertions of others. And others again, who had families, shrunk from

taking part in a cause, which, should it fail, would not only put their lives in danger, but expose their offspring to the revenge of a resentful enemy. This was the best apology of any that had been offered: natural affection was the pleader; and though blinded to its true interest, the weakness had an amiable source, and so was pardoned. But the other pleas were so basely selfish, so undeserving of any thing but scorn, that Sir Eustace Maxwell could not forbear expressing it. "When Sir William Wallace is entering port full sail, you will send your birlings to tow him in! but if a plank could save him now, you would not throw it to him! I understand you, sirs, and shall trouble your patriotism no more."

In short, none but about a hundred poor fellows, whom outrages had rendered desperate; and a few brave spirits, who would put up all to the hazard for so good a cause, could be prevailed on to

hold themselves in readiness to obey Sir Eustace, when he should see the moment to conduct them to Sir William Wallace. He was trying his eloquence amongst the clan of Lennox, when Ker arriving, stampt his persuasions with truth; and above five hundred men arranged themselves under their lord's standard. Maxwell gladly explained himself to Wallace's lieutenant; and summoning his little reserve, they marched with flying pennons through the town of Dumbarton. At sight of so much larger a power than they expected would venture to appear in arms; and sanctioned by the example of the Earl of Lennox, (whose name held a great influence in those parts) several, who before had held back from doubting their own judgment, now came forward; and nearly eight hundred well-appointed men, marched into the fortress.

So large a reinforcement, was gratefully received by Wallace; and he wel-

comed Maxwell with a cordiality, which inspired that young knight with an affection equal to his zeal.

A council being held in the chapel of the citadel, respecting the disposal of the new troops, it was decided that, (as the fortress must be maintained,) a division should be made. The five-hundred Lennox-men should remain with their earl in garrison; and the three-hundred from Dumbarton, under the command of Maxwell, should follow Wallace in the prosecution of his conquests.

These preliminaries being arranged, the remainder of the day was dedicated to more mature deliberations; to the unfolding of the plan of warfare which Wallace had conceived. As he first sketched the general outline of his design, and then proceeded to the particulars of each military movement, he displayed such comprehensiveness of mind; such depth of penetration; clearness of apprehension; facility in expedients; prompti-

tude in perceiving, and fixing on the most favourable points of attack; explaining their bearings upon the power of the enemy; and where the possession of such a castle would compel the neighbouring ones to surrender; and where the occupying of the flat country with a strong wall of troops, would be a more efficient bulwark than a thousand towers; that Maxwell gazed on him with admiration, and Lennox with wonder.

Mar had seen the power of his arms: Murray had often drunk the experience of a veteran from his genius, which, with a sort of supernatural cognizance, darted into the views of men, and turned their devices to his own advantage: hence, they were not surprised at hearing what filled strangers with amazement.

Lennox gazed on his youthful countenance, doubting whether he really were listening to military plans, great as general ever formed; or were visited in vision by a hero, who offered to his sleeping

fancy, designs far vaster than his waking faculties could have conceived. He had thought that the young Wallace might have won Dumbarton by a bold stroke: and that, when his invincible courage should be steered by graver heads, every success might be expected from his arms. But now that he heard him informing veterans on the art of war; and saw that when turned to any cause of policy, *the gordian knot of it he did unloose, familiar as his garter;* he marvelled, and said within himself, "Surely this man is born to be a sovereign!"

Maxwell, though equally astonished, was not so rapt. "You have made arms the study of your life?" inquired he.

"It was the study of my earliest days!" returned Wallace. "But when Scotland lost her freedom, as the sword was not drawn in her defence, I looked not where it lay. I then studied the arts of peace: that is over; and now the passion of my soul revives. When the mind is bent on

one object only, all becomes clear that leads to it:—zeal, in these cases, is almost genius."

Soon after these observations, the conference broke up; and Wallace, who had been too much occupied to see Lady Mar during the day, returned an answer by one of her messengers, that, according to Lord Mar's arrangement, he would be ready to attend her on the morrow at sunrise, when the Earl had decided to commence his journey.

According to this engagement, when the dawn broke, Sir William arose from his hether-bed in the great tower; and calling forth twenty brave Bothwellers to be the guard of Lord Mar, he told Ireland, that he should expect to have a cheering account of the wounded when he returned.

"And that I may assure the poor fellows," rejoined the honest soldier, "that something of yourself still keeps watch over their slumbers, leave me the sturdy

sword with which you won Dumbarton. It shall be hung up in their sight;[1] and a good soldier's wounds will heal by looking on it."

Wallace smiled: "Were it the holy King David's, we might expect such a miracle. But you are welcome to it; and there let it remain till I take it hence. Meanwhile lend me yours, Stephen, for a truer never fought for Scotland."

A glow of conscious valour flushed the cheek of the veteran. "There, my dear lord," said he, presenting it; "it will not dishonour your hand, for it has cut down many a proud Norwegian on the field of Largs."

Wallace took the sword, and turned to meet Murray with Edwin in the portal. When they reached the citadel, Lennox and all the officers in the garrison were assembled to bid their chief a short adieu. Wallace spoke to each separately; and then approaching the Countess, who appeared at the gate, led

her down the rock towards the horses which were to convey them to the shores of the frith of Clyde. Lord Mar, between Murray and Edwin, followed; and the servants, with twenty Bothwellers, completed the suite.

Being well mounted, they pleasantly pursued their way; avoiding all inhabited places, and resting in the deepest recesses of the hills. Lord Mar had proposed travelling all night; but at the close of the evening, his Countess complained of fatigue, and declared she could not advance farther than the eastern bank of the river Cart. No shelter appeared in sight, excepting a thick and extensive wood of hazles: but the lady being obstinate, and the air mild, Lord Mar at last became reconciled to his wife and son passing the night with no other canopy than the trees. Wallace, finding how it was decided, ordered cloaks to be spread on the ground for the Countess and her women; and seeing them laid to rest,

planted his men to keep guard around the circle.

The moon had sunk in the west, before the whole of his little camp were asleep: but when all were composed, he wandered forth by the dim light of the stars, to view the surrounding country; a country he had so often traversed in his boyish days. A little onwards to the north, lay the lands of his father; but the home of his ancestors, the Ellerslie of Renfrewshire, like his own Ellerslie of Clydesdale, his country's enemies had levelled with the ground. He turned in anguish of heart towards the south: there, less racking remembrances hovered over the distant hills.

Leaning on the shattered stump of an old tree, he fixed his eyes on the far-stretching plain, which alone seemed to divide him from the venerable Sir Ronald Crawford, and his youthful haunts at Ayr. Full of thoughts of her who used to share those happy scenes—he heard a

sigh behind him. He turned round, and beheld a female figure disappear amongst the trees. He stood motionless; again it met his view: it seemed to approach. A strange emotion awoke in his heart. When he last past these borders it was with his Marion, bringing her a bride from Ayr. What then was this ethereal visitant? The silver light of the stars seemed not brighter than the airy robes which floated in the wind. His heart paused—it beat violently—still the figure advanced. Lost in the wildness of his imagination, he exclaimed—*Marion!* and darted forwards, as if to rush into her embrace. But it fled, and again vanished. He dropped upon the ground in speechless disappointment.

"'Tis false!" said he, recovering from his first expectation; "'tis a phantom of my own creating. The pure spirit of Marion would never fly me: I loved her too well. She would not thus redouble my grief. But I shall go to thee, wife of

my soul!" cried he; "and that is comfort."

Such were his words, such were his thoughts, till the coldness of the hour, and the exhaustion of nature, putting a friendly seal upon his disturbed senses, he sunk upon the bank and fell into a profound sleep.

When he awoke, the lark was carolling her joyous matin above his head; and, to his surprise, he found that a plaid was laid over him. He threw it off, and beheld Edwin seated at his feet. "This has been your doing, my kind brother," said he; "but how came you to discover me?"

"I missed you, when the dawn broke; and at last found you here, sleeping under the dew."

"And has none else been astir?" inquired Wallace, thinking of the figure he had seen.

"None that I know of! All were fast asleep when I left the circle."

Wallace began to fancy that he had been labouring under the impressions of some powerful dream, and, saying no more, he returned to the wood. Finding his party ready, he took his station amongst them, and setting forth, proceeded cheerfully, though slowly, through the delightful vallies of Barochan. By sunset they arrived at the point where they were to embark. The journey ought to have been performed in half the time: but the Countess, complaining of weakness, petitioned for long rests; a compliance of gallantry, which the younger part of the cavalcade had rather reluctantly yielded.

CHAP. X.

AT Gourock, Murray engaged two small vessels; the one for the Earl and

Countess, with Wallace as their escort; and the other for himself and Edwin, to follow with the men.

It was a fine evening; and they embarked with a brisk gale in their favour:—the mariners calculated on reaching Bute in a few hours; but ere they had been half an hour at sea, the wind veered about, and obliged them to woo its breezes by a traversing motion; which, though it lengthened their voyage, increased its pleasantness, as it carried them often within near views of the ever-varying shores.—As they moved under a side wind, they beheld the huge irregular rocks of Dunoon overhanging the ocean; their deep ravines were strewn with shells, and weeds of the sea, and from their projecting brows, hung every shrub which lives in that saline atmosphere.

"There," said Lady Mar, gently inclining towards Wallace; "might the beautiful mermaid of Corie Vrekin(m) keep her court!—Observe how magnifi-

cently those arching cliffs overhang the hollows; and how richly they are studded with shells and sea flowers!"

No flower of the field, or of the ocean, that ever came within the ken of Wallace, wasted its sweetness unadmired. He assented to the remarks of Lady Mar, who eloquently expatiated on the beauties of the shores which they passed; and the hours fled pleasantly away, till turning the southern point of the Cowal mountains, the scene suddenly changed.—The wind, which had gradually arisen, blew a violent gale from that part of the coast; and the sea being pent between the rocks which skirt the continent and the northern side of Bute, became so boisterous, that the mariners began to think they should be driven upon the rocks of the island instead of reaching its bay. Wallace perceived their alarm; and seeing that it had cause, tore down the sails; and laid his nervous arm to the oar, to keep the vessel off the breakers against

which the waves were driving her.—The sky collected in a gloom; and while the teeming clouds seemed descending, even to rest upon the cracking masts, the swelling of the ocean, threatened to heave her up into their very bosoms.

Lady Mar looked with affright at the gathering tempest; and with difficulty was persuaded to retire into the little cabin.—The Earl forgot his debility in the general terror, and tried to re-assure the dismayed mariners; but a tremendous sweep of the gale drove the vessel far across the Isle of Bute, and shot it past the mouth of Loch Fyne, towards the perilous rocks of Arran.—" Here, our destruction is certain!" cried the captain of the barque.—

Lord Mar, perceiving that the crew were ignorant of the navigation of this side of the island, called to Wallace, (who, having observed that the steersman was going to run her on a sand-bank, had seized the helm.)—" While you keep the

men to their duty in clearing the vessel of water, and in rowing;" cried he; "as the less laborious task, I will steer."

The Earl being perfectly acquainted with the coast, Wallace resigned the helm to him:—but scarcely had he stepped forward, when a heavy sea broke over the deck, and carried two of the seamen overboard.—Wallace on the instant threw over a plank, and casting out a rope, called to the men to seize the one or the other.—Amidst a spray so blinding, that the vessel appeared in a cloud; and buffeted on each side by the raging waves, that seemed contending to tear her to pieces; she lay to for a few minutes, to rescue the sailors from the yawning gulph:—one poor creature caught by the rope and was saved; but the other was seen no more.

Again the barque was set loose to the current.—Wallace, with two men only, applied their strength to the oars:—the captain, and he who had been the steers-

man, were employed in the unceasing toil of laving out the water, which otherwise would certainly have sunk her.

Even while Wallace tugged at the oar, watching the thousand embattled cliffs which threatened their destruction, his eye looked for the vessel which contained his friends.—But the liquid mountains which rolled around him, prevented all view; and with hardly a hope of seeing them more, he pursued his attempt to preserve the lives of those committed to his care.

All this while Lady Mar lay in the little cabin in a state of stupefaction. Having fainted at the first alarm of danger, she had fallen from swoon to swoon; and now remained almost insensible upon the bosoms of her maids. In a moment the vessel struck with a great shock, and the next instant it seemed to move with a velocity incredible.—"The whirlpool! the whirlpool!" resounded from the deck. But the next instant the rapid motion

seemed suddenly checked, and the women, fancying they had struck again, shrieked aloud.—The cry, and the terrified words which accompanied it, aroused Lady Mar.—She started from her trance, and while the confusion redoubled, rushed upon the deck.

The mountainous waves, and lowering clouds, borne forward by the blast, anticipated the dreariness of night. The last rays of the setting sun had long passed away; and the deep shadows of the driving heavens, cast the whole into a gloom even more terrific than absolute darkness. The high and beetling rocks, towering aloft in precipitous walls, mocked the hopes of the sea-beaten mariner, should he even buffet the waters to reach their base. And the jagged shingles, deeply shelving beneath the waves, or projecting their pointed summits above, shewed the crew where the rugged death would meet them.

A little onward, a thousand massy

fragments, rent, in former tempests, from their summits, lay at the foundations of the immense cliffs which faced the cause of their present alarm; (a whirlpool almost as terrific as that of Scarba.) The moment the powerful blast, against which the weak arm of the Earl in vain contended, drove the vessel on the outward edge of the first circle of the vortex, Wallace, with the same rope in his hand with which he had saved the life of the seaman, leaped from the deck on the opposite rocks; and calling the men to follow him with similar ropes, fastened like his own to the head and stern of the vessel; he strove, by towing it along, to stem the suction of the current.

It was at this instant that Lady Mar rushed upon deck. The Earl perceived her the moment she appeared: "Down, for your life, Joanna!" cried he. She answered him not, but looked wildly around her. No where could she see Wallace. "Have I drowned him?"

cried she, in a voice of phrensy, and striking the women from her who would have held her back: "Let me clasp him, even in the deep waters!"

"Drowned who?" exclaimed the Earl, who happily had lost the last sentence in the roaring of the storm.

"Wallace, Wallace!" cried she, wringing her hands, and still struggling with her women. At that moment a huge wave sinking before her, discovered the object of her fears standing on the centre of a rock; or rather, followed by the men in the same laborious task, tugging forward the ropes to which the barque was attached. She gazed at them with wonder and affright, for notwithstanding the beating of the elements, (which seemed to find their breasts of iron, and their feet armed with some preternatural adhesion to the cliff;) they continued to bear along the vessel. Fortunately they now laboured, not against the wind. Sometimes they pressed forward on the level

edge of the rock; then a chasm yawning between, forced them to leap from cliff to cliff, or to spring on some more elevated projection. Thus contending with the vortex and the storm, they at last arrived at the doubling of Cuthon rock;(") the point that was to clear them of this minor Corie Vrekin: at this moment, the rope which Wallace held, broke, and with the shock he fell, backwards, into the sea. The fore-most man, who saw the fatal plunge, uttered a dreadful cry: but ere it was echoed by his fellows, Wallace had risen above the waves; and beating their whelming waters with his invincible arm, soon gained the vessel, and jumped upon the deck. The point was doubled; and the next instant the vessel struck. The men on the rocks cried, "There is no hope of getting her off. All must take to the water or perish."

Again Lady Mar (who in the former case her husband had forced to go below) appeared. At sight of Wallace, she for-

got every thing but him; and perhaps would have thrown herself into his arms, had not the Earl, supposing she was so eagerly advancing to himself, caught her in his.

"Are we to die?" cried she to Wallace, in a voice of horror.

"I trust that God has decreed otherwise," was his reply: "Compose yourself; and all may be well."

As Lord Mar, from his yet unhealed wounds, could not swim, Wallace tore up the benches of the rowers, and making a small raft, placed on it the Earl and Countess, with her two maids, and the child. The moment it was launched, while the men were towing it through the breakers, he jumped into the sea to swim by its side, and be in readiness in case of accident.

Having gained the shore, or rather the broken rocks that lie at the foot of the stupendous craigs which surround the Isle of Arran; Wallace, and his sturdy assist-

ants, conveyed the Countess and her terrified women up their acclivities. Where it was possible to climb with such a burthen, they carried them; and where it was not, they assisted them to scramble up alone. Fortunately for the ship-wrecked voyagers, at this period, though the wind raged, its violence was of some advantage, for it nearly cleared the heavens of clouds, and allowed the moon to send forth her guiding light. By her lamp, one of the men, who had gone a little to the right of the rest, discovered the mouth of a huge cave.

His communication was instantly made known to Wallace, who, glad of such a shelter for his dripping charges, soon had the comfort of seeing them seated in safety on its rocky floor. The child, whom he had guarded in his own arms during the difficult ascent, he now laid on the bosom of its mother. Lady Mar kissed the hand that relinquished it, and gave way to a flood of grateful tears.

The Earl, as he sank, almost powerless against the side of the cave, yet had strength enough to press Wallace to his heart:—" Ever preserver of me and mine!" cried he; " how must I bless thee!—My wife, my child—"

" Have been saved to you, my friend," interrupted Wallace, " by the presiding care of Him who walked the waves!—Without His especial arm, we must all have perished in this awful night; therefore, let our thanksgivings be directed to Him alone."

" So be it!" returned the Earl; and dropping on his knees, he breathed forth so pathetic and sublime a prayer of thanks, that the Countess, whose unhappy infatuation saw no higher power in this great preservation than the hand of the man she adored, trembled and bent her head upon the bosom of her child. She could not utter the solemn *Amen* which, at its close, was repeated by every voice in the cave. She felt that guilt

was cherished in her heart; and she could not lift her eyes to join with those who, with the boldness of innocence, called on Heaven to attest the sanctity of their vows.

Sleep soon sealed every weary eye excepting those of Wallace. A racking anxiety respecting the fate of the other vessel, in which were the brave Bothwellers and his two dear friends, filled his mind with dreadful pictures of what might have been their distress, with sad forebodings that they had not out-lived the storm. Sometimes, when wearied nature for a few minutes sunk into slumber, he would start grief-struck from the body of Edwin floating on the briny flood; and as he awoke, a cold despondence would tell him that his dream was perhaps too true. "O! I love thee, Edwin," exclaimed he to himself; "and I fear my hermit-heart was to be separated from all but a patriot's love! So is Heaven's will; and why then did I think of loving thee?

—must thou too die, that Scotland may have no rival; that Wallace may feel himself quite alone?"

Thus he sat musing, and listening with many a sigh to the dying gusts of wind and fainter dashing of the water; at last the former gradually subsided, and the latter obeying the retreating tide, sunk away in hoarse murmurs.

Morning began to dawn, and spreading upon the mountains of the opposite shore, shed a soft light over their misty sides. All was tranquil and full of beauty. That element which had lately in its rage threatened to ingulf them all, now flowed by the rocks at the foot of the cave in gentle undulations; and where the spiral cliffs gave a little resistance, the rays of the rising sun, striking on the bursting waves, turned their vapoury showers into dropping gems.

As his companions were yet wrapped in profound sleep, he stole away to learn on what spot of the Isle of Arran they

were cast. Close by the mouth of the cave he saw a cleft in the rock, into which he turned; and finding the footing sufficiently secure, soon gained the summit. Looking around, he found himself at the skirts of a chain of high hills, which seemed to stretch from side to side of the island, while their tops rose, in alpine succession, in a thousand grotesque and towering forms. The ptarmigan and capperkaily* were screaming from the upper regions; and the nimble roes with their fawns were bounding through the green defiles. No trace of human habitation appeared. But, from the size and population of the island, he knew that he could not be very far from inhabitants; and thinking it best to send the sailors in search of them, he retraced his steps. The vapours were now rolling in snowy wreaths down the opposite mountains, whose heads, shining in resplendent purple, seemed to view themselves in the bright reflections of the now smooth

sea. Nature, like a proud conqueror, appeared to have put on a triumphal garb, in exultation of the devastation she had committed the night before. Wallace shuddered, as the parallel occured to his mind, and turned from the scene.

As soon as he re-entered the cave, at the mouth of which lay the seamen, he awoke them, and sent them off on his mission. An hour had hardly elapsed, (during which time he watched by the sides of his still sleeping friends,) before the men returned, bringing with them a large boat and its proprietor; but, alas! no tidings of Murray and Edwin, whom he had hoped might have been driven somewhere on the island. In bringing the boat round to the creek under the rock, the men discovered that the sea had driven their wreck between two projecting rocks, where it now lay wedged. Though ruined as a vessel, yet sufficient seemed to have held together to warrant their exertions to save the property. Ac-

cordingly they entered it, and drew thence most of the valuables which belonged to Lord Mar.

While this was doing, Wallace re-ascended to the cave, and found the Earl awake. He told him that a boat was ready for their re-embarkation. "But where, my friend, are my nephews?" inquired he: "alas, that this fatal expedition has robbed me of them!"

Wallace tried to inspire him with a hope he hardly dared credit himself; that they had been saved on some more distant shore. The voices of the chiefs awakened the women; but the Countess still slept. Mar, suggesting the probability, that were she awake, she would resist trusting herself to the waves again, desired that she might be taken on board without disturbing her. This was readily done, as the men had only to take up the two extremities of the plaid on which she lay, and so carry her with an imperceptible motion to the boat. The Earl, who was

already in, received her head on his bosom; and all being on board, the rowers struck their oars, and once more they launched upon the sea.

While they were yet midway between the isles, with a bright sun playing its beams upon the gently rippling waves, the Countess, heaving a deep sigh, slowly opened her eyes. All around glared with the light of day; she felt the motion of the boat, and raising her head, saw that she was again embarked on the treacherous element on which she had lately experienced so many terrors. She grew deadly pale, and grasped her husband's hand. "My dear Joanna," cried he, "be not alarmed; we are all safe."

"And Sir William Wallace has left us?" demanded she.

"No madam;" answered a voice from the steerage; "not till this party be safe at Bute, do I quit it."

She looked around, with a grateful

smile: "Ever generous! How could I for a moment doubt my preserver!"

Wallace bowed, but remained silent. And the Countess sitting up, and noticing her child, they passed calmly along, till the vessel came in sight of a birling,(°) which, bounding over the waves, was presently so near the Earl's boat that the figures in each could be distinctly seen; and Wallace, to his rapturous surprise, beheld Murray and Edwin. That moment the latter, with a cry of joy, leaped into the sea, and in the next instant was over the boat side and clasped in the arms of Wallace. Real transport, true happiness, now dilated the heart of the before desponding chief. He pressed the dear boy again and again to his bosom, and kissed his white forehead with all the rapture of the fondest brother. "Thank God! thank God!" was all that Edwin could say; while, at every effort he made to tear himself away from Wallace, to congratulate his uncle on his

safety, his heart overflowing towards his friend, opened afresh, and he clung the closer to his breast; till at last exhausted with happiness, the little hero of Dumbarton gave way to the sensibility of his tender age, and the chief felt his bosom wet with the joy-drawn tears of his youthful knight.

While this was passing, the birling had drawn close to the boat, and Murray shook hands with his uncle and aunt, crying to Wallace, " That urchin is such a monopolizer, that I see you have not a greeting for any one else!" Edwin on this raised his face, and turned to the affectionate welcomes of Lord Mar. Wallace stretched out his hand to the ever gay Lord Andrew, and inviting him into the boat; soon learnt, that on the fearful night of the storm, the vessel in which Murray and his company were, (being appointed with a more efficient helmsman than he who steered Lord Mar's,) made direct to the nearest creek

in Bute; not doing as the other did, who, until danger stopped him, foolishly continued to aim for Rothsay. By this prudence, without having been in much peril, or sustained any fatigue, the whole party landed safely. The night coming on dark and tremendous; and not doubting that the Earl's rowers had carried him into a similar haven, Murray and his young companion kept themselves very easy in a fisher's hut till morning. At an early hour, however, they determined to set out; and having rewarded the boatmen, put themselves at the head of their Bothwellers; and expecting they should come up with the Earl and his party at Rothsay, walked over to the castle. Their consternation was unutterable when they found that Lord Mar was not there, neither had he been heard of. Full of terror, Murray and Edwin immediately threw themselves into a birling; resolved to seek their friends upon the seas. And when they did espy them,

the joy of Edwin was so great, that not even the unfathomable gulph could stop him from flying to the embrace of his friend.

While mutual felicitations passed, the boats, now nearly side by side, reached the shore; and the seamen, jumping on the rocks, moored their vessels under the projecting towers of Rothsay. The old steward, (in hope of the barque's preservation, and in expectation of its arrival, having prepared for the reception of his Lord and Lady,) on perceiving the boats draw near the land, hastened down to receive a master who had not blest his aged eyes for many a year. At sight of him, he expressed his exultation with a clamorous vehemence: and when he took the infant in his arms, that was to be the future representative of the house of Mar, he wept aloud. The Earl spoke to him affectionately; and then walked on with Edwin, whom he called to support him up the bank. Murray led the Countess out of the boat, while the Both-

wellers so thronged about Wallace, congratulating themselves on his safety, that she saw there was no hope of his yielding to her his arm.

Having entered the castle, the steward led them into a room in which he had spread a plentiful repast. Here, Murray (having before recounted the adventures of his sail) called for a history of what had befallen his friends. The Earl gladly took up the tale; and with many a glance of gratitude to Wallace, narrated the perilous events of their shipwreck, and their providential preservation on the Isle of Arran.

Happiness now seemed to have shed her heavenly influence over every bosom present. All hearts owned the grateful effects of the late rescue. The rapturous joy of Edwin burst forth into a thousand sallies of ardent and luxuriant imagination. The high spirits of Murray turned every transient subject into a *mirth-moving jest.* The veteran Earl, seemed re-

stored to health and to youth. And Wallace felt the sun of consolation expanding in his bosom; he had met a heart, though a young one, on which his soul might repose: that dear selected brother of his affection was saved from the whelming waves; and all his superstitious dreams of a mysterious doom, vanished before this manifestation of heavenly goodness. His friend too, the gallant Murray, was spared! How many subjects had he for unmurmuring gratitude! and with an unclouded brow, and happy spirit, he yielded to the impulse of the scene. He smiled; and with an endearing graciousness, listened to every fond speaker, while his ingenuous replies bespoke the treasures of love which sorrow had locked in his heart.

The complacency with which he regarded every one; the pouring out of his beneficent spirit, which seemed to embrace all as his dearest kindred; turned every eye and heart towards him, as to

the source of every bliss, as to a being who seemed made to love and be beloved by all. Lady Mar looked at him, listened to him, with her rapt soul seated in her eye. In his presence all was transport.

But when he withdrew for the night, what was then the state of her feelings! When the happy party separated, Murray, in the joyous effervescence of his spirits, embraced his aunt, and declared that the friendly salute should go round. Edwin modestly pressed Lady Mar's cheek; and it was Wallace's turn to touch it. He advanced to her with a look of sweetness; she trembled: "It is not my privilege, dear lady," said he, "to ascend so high;" and pressing her hand gracefully to his breast, he left the room.

She had found that his heart beat violently at the moment. His face was pale, and his lips quivered. The agitation, the sweetness of his voice, the unutterable expression of his countenance, while, as

he spoke, he veiled his eyes under their long brown lashes, raised such vague hopes in her bosom, that—he being gone, she hastened her adieus to the rest; eager to retire to bed, and there uninterruptedly muse on the happiness of having at last touched the heart of the man for whom she would resign all the world.

CHAP. XI.

THE morning would have brought annihilation to the Countess's new-fledged hopes, had not Murray been the first to meet her, as she came from her chamber; and, after hearing her describe a gay design she had just constructed, proceeded to seek his friend.

At some distance from the castle, on the cliffs, he met Wallace and Edwin. They had already been across the valley to the haven; and had ordered a boat to come immediately round, to convey them back to Gourock. "Postpone your flight, for pity's sake!" cried Murray, "if you would not destroy by discourtesy, what your gallantry has preserved! He then proceeded more seriously, to relate that Lady Mar was preparing a feast, which was to be spread in the glen behind the castle; and if you do not stay over noon to partake it," added he, "we may expect that she will bribe all the witches in the isle, to sink us before we reach the shore."

Wallace, though reluctant to pass an hour from the spot where he believed his duty called him, was prevailed on by the gay eloquence of Murray; and consenting to remain till evening, walked back to the castle.

The meeting of the morning was not

less cordial than the separation of the night before; and as Lady Mar withdrew to give orders for her rural banquet, time was left to the Earl for the arrangement of matters of more consequence. In a conversation which he held with Murray the preceding evening, he had learnt, that just before that young lord left Dumbarton, he had, (through Sir Eustace Maxwell's means,) sent a friar from the town, with a letter to Helen, at St. Fillans; informing her of the taking of the castle, and of the safety of her friends. This having satisfied the Earl with regard to his daughter, he did not mention her at all to Wallace; as he ever avoided encumbering his occupied mind with domestic subjects; and, therefore, when they met, their conversation generally turned on the one great theme.

While the Earl and his friends were marshalling armies, taking towns, and storming castles; the Countess, intent on other conquests, (meaning to destroy that

integrity by soft delights, which rugged scenes might render invulnerable) was trailing her wreaths of mingled flowers along the canopy of pendant birch which over-hung the spot she had selected for her entertainment.

When her lord and his guests were summoned to the feast, she met them at the mouth of the glen. Having before tried the effect of splendour, she now left all to the power of her natural charms, and appeared simply clad in her favourite green,(p) now peculiarly so because she saw it was the livery of Wallace. Moraig, the pretty grandchild of the steward, walked beside her, like the fairy queen of the scene; so smiling did she look, so gaily was she decorated in all the flowers of spring.—"Here is the lady of my elfin revels, holding her little king in her arms!" As the Countess spoke, Moraig held up the infant of Lady Mar, dressed like herself, in a tissue gathered from the field. The sweet babe laughed

and crowed, and made a spring to leap into Wallace's arms. The chief took him, and with an affectionate smile pressed his little cheek to his.

"I will leave you to nurse," continued the Countess, "while I do the little lord's honours to the rest of his guests." —She then said a few graceful words to each; and putting the Earl at the top of the table by the side of Moraig, stationed Murray and Edwin also; and seating herself at the bottom, left no place for Wallace but at her side.

Though he had felt the repugnance of a delicate mind; and the shuddering of a man, who held his person consecrated to the memory of the only woman he had ever loved; though he had felt these sentiments mingle into an abhorrence of the Countess, when she allowed her head to drop on his breast in the citadel; and though, while he remained at Dumbarton, (without absolutely charging her to himself, with any thing designedly im-

modest) he had certainly avoided her;—yet, since the wreck, the danger she had escaped, the general joy of all meeting again, had wiped away even the remembrance of his former cause of dislike; and he now sat by her, as by a sister, fondling her child; although at every sweet caress it reminded him of what might have been his,—of hopes lost to him for ever.

The repast over, the piper of the adjacent cottages appeared; and placing himself on a projecting rock, at the blast of his merry instrument the young peasants of both sexes, gaily drest for the occasion, came forward and began the dance.—At this sight, Edwin seized the little hand of Moraig, while Lord Andrew called a pretty lass from amongst the rustics, and joined the group. The happy Earl, with many a hearty laugh, enjoyed the jollity of his people; and while the steward stood at his lord's back, describing whose sons and daughters passed

before him in the reel, Mar remembered their parents; their fathers once his companions in the chase or on the wave; and their mothers, as the pretty maidens whom he used to pursue over the hills in the merry time of shealing.(q)

Lady Mar watched the countenance of Wallace as he looked upon the happy group: it was placid, and a soft complacency illumined his eye.—How different was the expression in hers, had he marked it! All within her was in tumult, and the characters were but too legibly imprinted on her face. But he did not look on her; for the child, whom the perfume of the flowers overpowered, began to cry. He rose, and having resigned it to the nurse, turned into a narrow vista of trees, and walked slowly on, unconscious whither he went.

Lady Mar, with an eager, though almost aimless haste, followed him with a light step till she saw him turn out of the vista; and then she lost sight of him.

To walk with him undisturbed in so deep a seclusion; to improve the impression which she was sure she had made upon his heart, into something more tender; to teach him to forget his Marion, in the hope of one day possessing her! All these thoughts ran in this vain woman's head:—and inwardly rejoicing that the shattered health of her husband promised her a ready freedom to become the wife of the man, to whom she would gladly belong, in honour or in dishonour; she hastened forward, as if the accomplishment of her wishes depended on this meeting. Peeping through the trees at the end of the vista, she saw him standing with folded arms, looking intently into the bosom of a large lake, which was so thickly surrounded with willows, that she could only perceive him as the wind tossed aside the branches.

Having stood for some time, he walked on. Several times she essayed to emerge and join him; but a sudden awe of him,

a conviction of that saintly purity which would shrink from the guilty vows she was meditating to pour into his ear; a recollection of the ejaculation with which he had accosted her before her hovering figure, when she haunted his footsteps on the banks of the Cart: these thoughts made her pause. He might again mistake her for the same dear object!—This image it was not her interest to recal. And to approach him near, to unveil her heart to him, and to be repulsed: there was madness in the idea, and she retreated.

She had no sooner returned to the scene of festivity, than she repented having allowed, what she deemed an idle alarm of over-strained delicacy, to drive her from the lake.—She would have hastened back, had not two or three aged female peasants engaged her, in spite of her struggles for extrication, to listen to long stories respecting her lord's youth. She had been with these women,

and by the side of the dancers, for nearly an hour before Wallace re-appeared. She sprung from them as he approached: "Where, truant, have you been?"

"In a beautiful solitude," returned he, "amongst a luxuriant grove of willows."—

"Ay!" cried she, "it is called Glenshealeach;(r) and a sad scene was acted there!—About ten years ago, a lady of this island, drowned herself in the lake they hang over, because the man she loved despised her."—

"Unhappy woman!" observed Wallace.

"Then you would have pitied her?" rejoined Lady Mar.

"He cannot be a man, that would not pity a woman under those circumstances."

"Then *you* would not have consigned her to such a fate?"

Wallace was startled by the peculiar tone in which this simple question was asked.—It recalled the action in the

citadel; and unconsciously turning a penetrating look on her, his eyes met hers. He need not have heard farther to have learnt more. She hastily looked down and coloured; and he, wishing to misunderstand a language so disgraceful to herself, so dishonouring to her husband, with a negligent air gave some trifling answer; and then, making some observation about the Earl, advanced to him. Lord Mar was tired with the scene; and taking the arm of Wallace, they returned together into the house.

Edwin and Murray soon followed; and arrived time enough to see from the window, the little pinnace that was to take them to the main land, draw up under the castle, and throw out her moorings. The Countess too, saw its blue streamers; and hastening into the room where the young chieftains sat, (for the Earl being over-wearied, had retired to repose) inquired the reason of that boat having drawn so near the castle.

"Only that it may take us from it," replied Murray.

The Countess fixed her eyes with a powerful and unequivocal expression upon Wallace.—"My gratitude is ever due to your kindness, my dear madam," said he, still wishing to be blind to what he could not but perceive; "and that we may ever deserve it, we go to keep the enemy from your doors."

"Yes," added Murray, "and to keep a more insidious foe from our own too! Edwin and I feel it rather dangerous to bask too long in these sunny bowers."

"But surely your chief is not afraid!" said she, casting a soft glance at Wallace. "And nevertheless I must fly," returned he, bowing to her.—"That you positively shall not," added she, with a fluttering joy at her heart, thinking she was about to conquer; "you stir not a step this night, else I shall brand you all as a band of cowards."

"Call us by all the names in the poltroon's calendar," cried Murray, seeing by the countenance of Wallace that his resolution was not moved; "and I shall gallop off from your black-eyed Judith, as if chased by Cupid himself."—"So, dear aunt," rejoined Edwin, smiling, "if you do not mean to play Circe to our Ulysses, give us leave to go!" Lady Mar looked at the boy intently, as he innocently uttered these words.—"Are you indeed my nephew?" whispered she. A strange jealousy glanced on her heart; she had never seen Edwin Ruthven; the blooming cheek of this youth, his smooth skin, his almost impassioned fondness for Wallace; all made a wild suspicion rush upon her mind. Edwin, scarcely understanding her question, answered gaily,—"I hope so, for I am Lord Mar's; and besides, I love to be related to all handsome ladies!" As he spoke, he snatched a kiss from her hand, and darted after

Murray; who had disappeared, to give some speeding directions respecting the boat.

Left thus alone with the object of her every wish, in the moment when she thought she was going to lose him, perhaps for ever, she forgot all prudence, all reserve; and laying her hand on his arm, as he with a respectful bow was also moving away, arrested his steps. She held him fast; but agitation preventing her speaking, she trembled violently; and weeping, dropped her head upon his shoulder.—He was motionless.—Her tears redoubled.—He felt the embarrassment of his situation; and at last extricating his tongue, which surprise and shame for her had chained, in a gentle voice he inquired the cause of her uneasiness.—"If for the safeties of your nephews—"

"No, no," cried she, interrupting him, "read my fate in that of the Lady of Glenshealeach!"

Again he was silent; astonished, fear-

ful of too promptly understanding so disgraceful a truth, he found no words in which to answer her; and her emotions became so violent, that he expected she would have swooned in his arms.

"Cruel, cruel Wallace!" at last cried she, clinging to his arms; for he had once or twice attempted to disengage and re-seat her on the bench; "your heart is steeled, or it would understand mine. It would at least pity the wretchedness it has created. But I am despised, and I can yet find the watery grave from which you rescued me."

To dissemble longer, would have been folly. Wallace now resolutely took the Countess by both her arms, and seating her, though with gentleness, addressed her.—"Your husband, Lady Mar, is my friend: had I even a heart to give to woman, not one sigh should arise in it to his dishonour. But I am lost to all warmer affections than that of friendship. I may regard man as my brother, woman as my

sister; but never more can I look on female form with love."

Lady Mar's tears now flowed in a more tempered current.

"But were it otherwise," cried she, "only tell me, that had I not been bound with chains which my kinsmen forced upon me; had I not been made the property of a man who, however estimable, was of too paternal years for me to love; ah! tell me, if these tears should have flowed in vain?"

Wallace seemed to hesitate what to answer.

Wrought up to agony, she threw herself on his breast, exclaiming, "Answer! but drive me not to despair.—I never loved man before—and now to be scorned?—Oh, kill me, too dear Wallace, but tell me not that you never could have loved me."

Wallace was alarmed at her vehemence. "Lady Mar," returned he, "I am incapable of saying any thing to you, that is

inimical to your duty to the best of men, I will even forget this distressing conversation, and continue through life to revere, equal with himself, the wife of my friend."

"And I am to be stabbed with this?" replied she, in a voice of indignant anguish.

"You are to be healed with it, Lady Mar," returned he; "for it is not a man, like the rest of his sex, that now addresses you, but a being whose heart is petrified to marble. I could feel no throb of your's; I should be insensible to all your charms, were I even vile enough to see no evil in trampling upon your husband's rights. Yes, were virtue lost to me, still memory would speak; still would she urge that the chaste and last kiss imprinted by my Marion on these lips, should live there in unblemished sanctity, till I again meet her angel embraces in the world to come!"

The Countess, awed by his solemnity,

but not put from her suit, exclaimed, "What she was, I would be to thee—thy consoler, thine adorer!—Time may set me free; O! till then, only give me leave to love thee, and I shall be happy!"

"You dishonour yourself lady," returned he, "by these petitions.—And for what? You plunge your soul in guilty wishes; you sacrifice your peace, and your self-esteem to a phantom: for, I repeat, I am dead to woman; and the voice of love, sounds like the funeral knell of her who will never breathe it to me more." He rose as he spoke. And the Countess, pierced to the heart, and almost despairing of now retaining any part of his esteem, was devising what next to say, to deprecate the scorn she dreaded, when Murray came into the room.

Wallace instantly observed that his countenance was troubled. "What has happened?" inquired he.

"A messenger from the main land has arrived with bad news from Ayr."

"Are they of a private or a public nature?" rejoined Wallace.

"Of both.—There has been a horrid massacre, in which the heads of many noble families have fallen." As he spoke, the paleness of his countenance revealed to his friend that part of the information, which, he had found himself unable to communicate.

"I comprehend my loss," cried Wallace; "Sir Ronald Crawford is slain!—Bring the messenger in."

Murray withdrew; and Wallace seating himself, remained, with a fixed and stern countenance, gazing on the ground. Lady Mar durst not breathe, for fear of disturbing the horrid stillness which seemed to lock up his grief and indignation.

Lord Andrew re-entered with a stranger. Wallace rose to meet him; and seeing Lady Mar, "Countess," said he, "these bloody recitals are not for your ears;" and waving her to withdraw, she left the room.

"This gallant stranger," said Murray, "is Sir John Graham. He has just left that new theatre of Southron treachery."

"I have hastened hither," cried the knight, "to call your victorious arm to take a signal vengeance on the murderers of your grandfather. He and eighteen other Scottish chiefs, have been treacherously put to death in the Barns of Ayr."(8)

Graham then proceeded to narrate the event more circumstantially. He, and his father Lord Dundaff, having been on the south coast of Scotland, stopped to rest at Ayr, in their way homeward. They arrived there, the very day that Lord Aymer De Valence entered, a fugitive from Dumbarton castle. Much as that earl might have wished to keep the victory of Wallace, a secret from the inhabitants of Ayr, he found it impossible. Two or three soldiers (who had escaped also,) whispered the hard fighting they had endured; and thus, in half an hour after

the arrival of the English earl, every soul knew that the recovery of Scotla n was began. Elated with this intelligence, the Scots went under night from house to house, congratulating each other on so miraculous an interference in their favour: and many stole to Sir Ronald Crawford, to felicitate the venerable knight on his glorious grandson. The good old man listened to their animated eulogiums on Wallace with meek joy: and when Lord Dundaff, who offered his congratulations with the rest, said, "But when all Scotland lay in vassalage, where did he imbibe this spirit, to tread down tyrants?" the venerable patriarch replied;—"He was always a noble boy. In infancy he was the defender of every child whom he saw oppressed by boys of greater power; he was even the champion of the brute creation, for no poor animal was ever allowed to be tortured near him. The old looked on him for comfort, the young for protection. From infancy to man-

hood he has been a benefactor; and though the cruelty of our enemies have widowed his youthful years; though he should go childless to the grave, the brightness of his virtues will spread more glories round the name of Wallace, than a thousand posterities."

The next morning this venerable old man, and other chiefs of similar consequence, were summoned by Sir Richard Arnulf, to the governor's palace, there to deliver in a schedule of their estates, *that quiet possession might be granted to them under the great seal of Lord Aymer De Valence, the Deputy Warden of Scotland.*

The grey-headed knight, not being so active as his compeers of more juvenile years, happened to be the last who entered this tiger's den. Wrapped in a tartan plaid, his silver hair covered with a blue bonnet, and leaning on his staff, he was walking along, attended by two of his domestics, when Sir John Graham met him at the gate

of the palace. He smiled on him as he passed, and whispered—"It will not be long before my Wallace makes even the forms of vassalage unnecessary; and then these failing limbs may sit undisturbed at home, under the fig-tree and vine of his planting!"

"God grant it!" returned Graham; and he saw Sir Ronald admitted within the interior gate. The servants were ordered to remain without. Sir John walked there some time, expecting the re-appearance of the knight, whom he intended to assist in leading home; but after an hour's stay, finding no signs of any regress from the palace, he thought his father might be wondering at his delay, and he turned his steps towards his own lodgings. As he passed along, he met several Southron detachments hurrying across the streets. In the midst of some of these companies he saw one or two Scottish men of rank, strangers to him, who, by their countenances, he guessed

were prisoners. Indeed he did not go far, before he saw a chieftain whom he knew, in painful circumstances; but as he was hastening towards him, the noble Scot raised his manacled hand and turned away his head. Graham instantly retreated; but the soldiers, for some time afterwards looking back, regarded him with an air of suspicion. This was a sufficient warning to the young knight; and soon after darting into an obscure alley which led to the gardens of his father's lodgings, he was hurrying forward, when he saw one of Lord Dundaff's men running towards him.

Panting with haste, he informed his young master, that a party of armed men had come under De Valence's warrant, to seize Lord Dundaff and to take him to prison; there to lie with others, who, like himself, were charged with having taken a part in a conspiracy with the grandfather of the insurgent Wallace.

The officer of the band who took Lord

Dundaff, told him in the most insulting language, that "Sir Ronald his ringleader, with eighteen nobles his accomplices, had all suffered the punishment of their crime; and were lying headless trunks in the judgment-hall."

"Fly, therefore, my master;" repeated the man; "fly to Sir William Wallace, and require his hand to avenge his kinsman's blood, and to free his countrymen from prison. These are your father's commands: he directed me to seek you out, and to give them to you."

Graham, alarmed for the life of his father, hesitated how to act. To leave him, seemed to be abandoning him to the death the others had received; and yet, only by obeying him, could he have any hopes of averting his threatened fate. Once seeing the path he ought to pursue, he immediately struck into it; and giving his signet to the man, to assure Lord Dundaff of his obedience; he mounted a

horse, which the faithful creature had brought to the town end; and setting off full speed, allowed nothing to stay him (changing his horses as they tired) till he reached Dumbarton castle. There, hearing that Wallace was gone to Bute, he threw himself into a boat, and plying every oar, reached that island in a shorter space of time than the voyage had ever before been completed.

Being now brought into the presence of the chief whom he had sought with such breathless expedition; he narrated his dismal tale with a simplicity and pathos, which would have instantly drawn the sword of Wallace, had he had no kinsman to avenge, no friend to release from the Southron dungeons. But as the case stood, his bleeding grandfather lay before his eyes, and the axe hung over the head of the virtuous nobles of his country.

Wallace heard the young chieftain to an end, without speaking, or altering the

fixed determination of his countenance. But at the close, with an augmented suffusion of blood in his face, and his brows denouncing some tremendous fate, he rose :—" Sir John Graham," said he, " I attend you."

" Whither ?" demanded Murray.

" To Ayr," answered Wallace ; " this moment I will set out for Dumbarton to bring away the sinews of my strength ; and then this arm shall shew, how I loved that good old man."

" Your men," interrupted Graham, " are already awaiting you on the opposite shore. I presumed to command for you : for on entering Dumbarton, and finding you were absent ; after having briefly recounted my errand to Lord Lennox ; I dared to interpret your mind, and to order Sir Alexander Scrymgeour, and Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, with all your own force, to follow me to the coast of Renfrew."

" Thank you, my friend !" cried Wal-

lace, grasping his hand; "you read my soul. We go directly—I cannot stay to bid your uncle farewel;" said he to Lord Andrew; "remain, and tell him to bless me with his prayers; and then, dear Murray, follow me to Ayr."

Edwin, ignorant of what the stranger had to impart, at the sight of the chiefs approaching from the castle-gate, hastened forward with the news that all was ready for their embarkation. He was hurrying out his information, when the altered countenance of his general checked him. He looked at the stranger; his features were agitated and severe. He turned towards his cousin; all there was grave and distressed. Again he glanced at Wallace, but every look threatened; no word was spoken; and Edwin saw him leap into the boat, and followed by the stranger. The astonished boy, though not noticed, would not be left behind, and stepping in also, sat down beside his chief.

"I shall follow you in an hour," exclaimed Murray. The seamen pushed off; and giving loose to their swelling sail, in five minutes they were wafted out of the little harbour, and turning a point, lost sight of the castle.

"Here is a list of the murdered chiefs; and of those who are now in the dungeons expecting the like treatment;" said Graham, holding out a parchment; "it was given to me by my faithful servant." Wallace took it, but seeing his grandfather's name at the top, he could look no further; closing the scroll, "Gallant Graham," said he, "I want no stimulus to urge me to the extirpation I meditate. If God blesses my arms, not one perpetrator of this horrid massacre, shall be alive to-morrow, to repeat the deed."

"What massacre?" Edwin ventured to inquire. Wallace put the parchment into his hand. Edwin opened the roll, and on seeing the words, *A List of the Scottish Chiefs murdered on the 18th of*

June 1297, *in the Judgment Hall of the English Barons at Ayr;* his cheek, rendered pale by the suspense of his mind, now reddened with the hue of indignation: but when immediately afterwards, the venerated name of his general's grandfather met his sight, his horror-struck eye sought the face of Wallace: it was dark as before; and he was now in earnest discourse with Graham.

Edwin, forbearing to interrupt him, continued to read over the blood-registered names. After *Sir Ronald Crawford's*, followed that of *Sir Bryce Blair*, then *Sir Neil Montgomery*, and those of *the Baron of Auckinleck, Sir Walter Barclay, Sir Thomas Boyd,* and *the Chieftain of Kennedy.*(t) In turning the page to read farther, his eye glanced to the opposite side; and he saw at the head of *A List of Prisoners in the Dungeons of Ayr,* the name of *Lord Dundaff;* and immediately after, that of *Lord Ruthven!* He uttered a piercing cry, and extending his

arms to Wallace, who turned round at so unusual a sound, the terror-struck boy exclaimed, "My father is in their hands! —Oh, Sir William, if you are indeed my brother, fly to Ayr and save him!"

Wallace rose instantly, and taking up the open list, which Edwin had dropped, he saw the name of Lord Ruthven amongst the prisoners; and folding his arms around this affectionate son; "Compose yourself," said he; "it is to Ayr I am going; and if the God of justice be my speed, your father and Lord Dundaff shall not see another day in prison."

Edwin threw himself on the neck of his friend: "My benefactor!" was all he could utter. Wallace pressed him silently in his arms.

"Who is this amiable youth?" inquired Graham; "to which of the noble companions of my captived father, is he son?"

"To William Ruthven,"([u]) answered Wallace; "the valiant Lord of the Carse

of Gowrie. And it is a noble scion from so glorious a root. He it was that enabled me to win Dumbarton. Look up, my brother!" cried Wallace, trying to regain so tender a mind from the paralizing terrors which had seized it; "Look up, and hear me recount the first fruits of your maiden arms, to our gallant friend!"

Edwin, covered with blushes, arising from anxious emotion, as well as from a happy consciousness of having won the praises of his general, rose from his breast, and bowing to Sir John, still leaned his head upon the shoulder of Wallace. That amiable being, who, in seeking to wipe the tear of affliction from the cheek of others, minded not the drops of blood which were distilling in secret from his own heart; began the recital of his first acquaintance with his young Sir Edwin. He enumerated every particular of his bringing the Bothwellers through the enemy-encircled mountains, to Glenfinlass; of his scaling the walls of Dum-

barton, to make the way smooth for the Scots to ascend; and of his after prowess in that well-defended fortress. As Wallace proceeded, the wonder of Graham was raised to a pitch, only to be equalled by his admiration, and taking the hand of Edwin, "Receive me, brave youth," said he, "as your second brother; Sir William Wallace is your first: but this night we shall together fight for our fathers, and let that be our bond of kindred!"

Edwin pressed his cheek with his innocent lips: "Let us together free them;" cried he; "and then we shall be born twins in happiness."

"So be it;" cried Graham; "and Sir William Wallace shall be the sponsor of that hour."

Wallace smiled on them; and moving to the head of the vessel, saw, not only that they drew near the shore, but that the beach was covered with armed men. To be sure whether or no they were his

own, he drew his sword, and waved it in the air. At that moment a hundred falchions flashed in the sun-beams, and the shout of "Wallace!" came loudly on the breeze.

Graham and Edwin started on their feet; the seamen plying their oars,—in the course of a few minutes Wallace jumped on shore, and was received with acclamations by his thronging troops.

CHAP. XII.

WALLACE no sooner landed than he commenced his march. Murray came up with him on the banks of the Irwin; and as Ayr was not a very long journey from that river, at two hours before midnight the little army entered Laglane wood, where they halted while their

general proceeded to reconnoitre the town. The wind swept in gusts through the trees, and seemed by its dismal yellings to utter warnings of the dreadful deeds he was come to perform. Wallace had already declared his plan of destruction: and Graham, as a first measure, went to the spot which he had fixed on with Macdougal his servant, as a place of rendezvous. Having mentioned midnight as the most probable time of his return, Macdougal was prepared to be always there at that hour. Graham, after a short stay, re-appeared with the man; who informed Wallace, that in honour of the sequestrated lands of the murdered chiefs, having been that day partitioned by De Valence amongst certain Southron lords, a grand feast was now held in the governor's palace. Under the very roof where they had shed the blood of the blindly-trusting Scots, they were now keeping this carousal!

"Then is our time to strike!" cried

Wallace. And ordering detachments of his men to take possession of the avenues to the town; he, with others, made a circuit, to come in front of the castle-gates by a path that was less frequented than the main street. The darkness being so great that no object could be distinctly seen, they had not gone far before Macdougal, who had undertaken to be their guide, suddenly discovered, by the projection of a hill on the right, that he had lost the road.

"Never mind," answered Wallace, "our swords will find us one."

Graham, uneasy at any mistake in a situation where so much was at stake, gladly hailed a long line of light, which streamed from what he supposed the window of a distant cottage. Kirkpatrick, with Macdougal, offered to go forward and explore the way. In a few minutes they arrived at a thatched building, from which, to their surprise, issued the wailing strains of the coronach.(*) Kirkpa-

trick paused. Its melancholy notes were sung by female voices; and seeing no danger in applying to such harmless inhabitants, to learn the way to the citadel, he proceeded to the door, and intending to knock, the weight of his mailed arm burst open its slender latch, and discovered two poor women in an inner apartment, wringing their hands over a shrouded corse. While Kirkpatrick entered, his friends came up; and Murray and Graham, who also were struck with sounds never breathed over the vulgar dead, arrested by curiosity, looked in, wondering what noble Scot could be the subject of lamentation in so lowly an abode. The stopping of these two chieftains impeded the steps of Wallace, who was pressing forward without either eye or ear for any thing but the object of his march. Kirkpatrick at that moment appeared at the threshold, and without a word put forth his hand, and seizing the arm of his commander, pulled him into

the cottage. Before Wallace had time to demand the reason of this, he saw a woman run forward with a light in her hand, the beams of which falling on the face of the knight of Ellerslie, with a shriek of joy she rushed towards him, and threw herself upon his neck.

He instantly recognised Elspa his nurse, the faithful attendant on his grandfather's declining years, the happy matron who had decked the bridal bed of his Marion; and with an anguish of recollections that almost unmanned him, he returned her affectionate embrace.

" Here he lies!" cried the old woman, drawing Sir William towards the rushy bier, which was covered with a linen cloth; and before he had time to demand, " Who?" she pulled down the shroud, and disclosed, to the shuddering spectators, the body of Sir Ronald Crawford. Wallace gazed on it with a look of such dreadful import, that Edwin, whose anxious eyes then sought his countenance,

trembled with a nameless horror. "Oh," thought he, "to what is this noble soul reserved! Is he doomed to extirpate the enemies of Scotland, that every ill falls direct upon his head!"

"Sad, sad bier for the Lord of Loudon!" cried the old woman; "a poor wake (³) to mourn the loss of him who was the benefactor of all the country round! But had I not brought him here, the salt sea must have been his grave." Here sobs prevented her utterance; but after a short pause, with many vehement lamentations over the virtues of the dead, and imprecations on his murderers, she related, that as soon as the woful tidings were brought to Monktown kirk, of the death of its master; (and brought too, by the Southron who was to take it in possession;) she and the Scots who would not swear fidelity to the new lord, were driven from the house. She hastened to the bloody theatre of the massacre; and there beheld the bodies of the murdered

chiefs drawn on sledges, successively to the sea-shore. Elspa knew that of her master, by a scar on his breast, which he had received in the battle of Largs. When she saw corse after corse thrown with a careless hand, into the waves; and that a man approached to consign the honoured chief of Loudon to the same unhallowed burial, she threw herself franticly on the body; and so moved the man's compassion, that, taking advantage of the time when his comrades were out of sight, he permitted her to wrap the dead Sir Ronald in her plaid, and so carry him away between her sister and herself. But ere she raised her sacred burthen, he directed her to seek the venerable head from amongst the others which lay mingled in a sack, and drawing it forth, she placed it beside the body, and hastily retired with both to the hovel where Wallace had found her. It was a shepherd's hut; but the desolation of the times having long ago driven away its former inhabitant, she

had hoped, that in so lonely an obscurity, she might have performed a chieftain's rites to the remains of the murdered lord of the very lands on which she wept him. These over, she meant he should be interred in secret by the fathers of a neighbouring church, he had in life endowed. With these intentions, she and her sister were chanting over him the sad dirge of their country, when Sir Roger Kirkpatrick burst open their door. "Ah!" cried she, as she closed her dismal narrative; "though two lonely women were all they left of the once numerous household of Sir Ronald Crawford, to sigh the last lament over his once revered body; yet in that sad midnight hour, our earthly voices were not alone; the wakeful spirits of his daughters, hovered in the air, and joined the deep coronach!"

Wallace sighed heavily as he looked on the animated face of the aged mourner. Attachment to the venerable dead seemed

to have inspired her with thoughts beyond her station; but the heart is an able teacher, and he saw that true affection speaks but one language.

As her ardent eyes withdrew from their heaven-ward gaze, they fell upon the shrouded face of her master. A napkin concealed the wound of decapitation. "Lords," cried she, in a burst of recollection; "ye have not seen all the cruelty of these ruthless murderers!" At these words she suddenly withdrew the linen, and lifting up the pale head, held it wofully towards Wallace: "Here," cried she, "once more kiss these lips! They have often kissed yours when you were a babe, and as insensible to his love, as he is now to your sorrow."

Wallace received the head in his arms: the long silver beard, thick with gouts of blood, hung over his hands. He fixed his eyes on it intently for some minutes. An awful silence pervaded the room: every eye was rivetted upon him.

Looking round on his friends with a countenance, whose deadly hue gave a sepulchral fire to the gloomy denunciation of his eyes; "Was it necessary," said he, "to turn my heart to iron, that I was brought to see this sight?" All the tremendous purpose of his soul was read in his face, while he laid the head back upon the bier, and added, "I obey thy signal, Almighty Power of justice! and deep shall Ayr's street flow in blood for this!" As he spake he rushed from the hut, and with rapid strides proceeded in profound silence towards the palace.(z)

He well knew that no honest Scot could be under that roof. The building, though magnificent, was altogether a structure of wood; to fire it, then, was his determination. To destroy all at once in the theatre of their cruelty; to make an execution, not engage in a warfare of man to man, was his resolution: for they were not soldiers he was seeking, but assassins: and to pitch his brave Scots in

the open field, against such unmanly wretches, would be to dishonour his men, and to give criminals a chance for the lives they had forfeited.

All being quiet in the few streets through which he passed; and having set strong bodies of men at the mouth of every sallyport of the citadel, he turned at once upon the guard at the barbacan-gate, and slaying them before they could give the alarm, he and his chosen troop entered the portal, and made direct to the palace. The lights which blazed through the windows of the banquetting-hall, shewed him to the spot: and having detached Graham and Edwin to storm the keep where their fathers were confined; he took the half-intoxicated sentinels at the palace-gates by surprise, and striking them into a sleep from which they would wake no more; he fastened the doors upon the assassins. His men surrounded the building with hurdles filled with combustibles, which they had

prepared according to his directions; and when all was ready, Wallace, with the mighty spirit of retribution nerving every limb, mounted to the roof, and tearing off part of the shingles; with a flaming brand in his hand, shewed himself glittering in arms, to the affrighted revellers beneath; and, as he threw it blazing amongst them, he cried aloud, "The blood of the murdered calls for vengeance, and it comes!"

At that instant the matches were put to the fagots which surrounded the building; and the party within, springing from their seats, hastened towards the doors: all were fastened on them; and retreating into the midst of the room, they fearfully looked towards the tremendous figure above, which, like a supernatural being, seemed indeed come to rain down fire upon their guilty heads. Some, shook with superstitious dread; and others, driven to atheistical despair, with horrible execrations, strove again to force

a passage through the doors. A second glance told De Valence, whose was the hand which had launched the thunderbolt at his feet; and turning to Sir Richard Arnulf, he cried in a voice of horror, "My arch-enemy is there!"

The rising smoke from within and without the building, now obscured his terrific form. The shouts of the Scots, as the fire covered its walls; and the streaming flames licking the windows, and pouring into every opening of the building, raised such a terror in the breasts of the wretches within, that with the most horrible cries, they again and again flew to the doors to escape. Not an avenue appeared: almost suffocated with smoke, and scorched by the blazing rafters which fell from the burning roof, they at last made a desperate attempt to break a passage through the great portal. Arnulf was at their head; and sunk to abjectness by his despair, in a voice, which terror rendered piercing, he called aloud

for mercy! The words reached the ear of Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, who stood nearest to the door; in a voice of thunder he replied—"That ye gave, ye shall receive! Where was mercy, when our fathers and our brothers fell beneath your swords?"

Aymer De Valence came up at this moment, with a wooden pillar, which he and the strongest men in the company, had torn from under the gallery that surrounded the room; and with all their strength dashing it against the door, they at last drove it from its bolts. But now a wall of men opposed them! Desperate at the sight, and with a burning furnace in their rear, it was not the might of man that should prevent their escape; and with the determination of despair; they rushed forward, and the foremost rank of the Scots fell. But ere the exulting Southrons, who began to hope, could press into the opened space, Wallace himself had closed upon them; and

Arnulf, the merciless Arnulf, whose voice had pronounced the sentence of death upon Sir Ronald Crawford, died beneath his hand.

Wallace was not aware that he had killed the governor of Ayr, till his enemies, by their terror-struck exclamations, informed him that the ruthless instigator of the massacre was slain. This event was welcome news to the Scots; and hoping that the next death would be that of De Valence, they pressed on with redoubled energy.

The soldiers of the garrison, aroused by such extraordinary noise, and alarmed by the flames of the palace, hastened, half-dressed, though with arms in their hands, to the spot. But their presence rather added to the confusion, than gave assistance to the besieged. The men were without leaders; and not daring to put themselves in action, for fear of being afterwards punished (in the case of a mischance) for having presumed to move

without their officers, they stood dismayed and irresolute; while those very officers, who had been all at the banquet, were falling in heaps under the swords of the resistless Scots.

The men who guarded the prisoners having their commanders with them, made a stout resistance; and one of them stealing off, gathered a few companies of the scattered forces of the garrison, and suddenly taking Graham in flank, made no inconsiderable havoc amongst that part of his division. Edwin, fearful that his friend would be overpowered, blew the signal for assistance. Wallace, seeing that the day was won at the palace, left the finishing of the affair, and he hoped the seizure of De Valence, to Kirkpatrick and Murray; and drawing off a small party to reinforce Graham, he, in his turn, took the Southron officer by surprise. The enemy's ranks fell around him like corn beneath the sickle; and grasping a huge battering-ram which his

men had found, he burst open the door of the keep. Graham and Edwin with shouts of triumph, rushed in: and Wallace, sounding his own bugle with the notes of victory, his reserves, (whom he had placed at the sallyports,) entered in every direction,—and received the flying soldiers of De Valence upon their pikes.

Dreadful was now the carnage; for the Southrons, forgetting all discipline, fought every man for his life; and the furious Scots driving them into the far-spreading flames; what escaped the sword, would have perished in the fire, had not the relenting heart of Wallace pleaded for bleeding humanity, and he ordered the trumpet to sound a parley. He was obeyed: and standing on an adjacent mound, in an awful voice he proclaimed, that *whoever had not been accomplices in the horrible massacre of the Scottish chiefs, if they would ground their arms, and take an oath never again to*

serve against Scotland;—their lives should be spared.

Hundreds of swords fell to the ground; and their late holders, kneeling at his feet, took the oath prescribed. At the head of those who surrendered, appeared the captain who had commanded at the prison: he was the only officer of all the late garrison who survived: all else had fallen in the conflict, or had perished in the flames. When he saw that this was the case, and that not one of his late numerous companions existed, to go through the same humiliating ceremony; with an aghast countenance he said to Wallace, as he put his sword into his hand; "Then with this weapon, I must believe that I am surrendering into your hands, Sir William Wallace, the possession of this castle, and the government Ayr?—I see not one of my late commanders: all must be slain; and for me to hold out longer, would be to sacrifice my men; not to redeem that which has been so completely

wrested from us.—But I serve severe exactors; and I hope that your testimony, my conqueror, will assure my King that I fought as became his standard."

Wallace gave him a gracious answer; and committing him to the generous care of Murray, he turned to welcome the approach of the lords Dundaff and Ruthven, who, with a noble train of other Scottish nobles, brothers in captivity, now appeared from the keep. Graham had deemed it most prudent, that exhausted by anxiety and privations, they should not come forth to join in the battle; and, therefore, not until the sound of victory echoed through the arches of their dungeons, would he suffer the eager Dundaff to see and thank his deliverer. Meanwhile the young Edwin; after appearing before the eyes of his amazed father, like the angel who opened the prison-gates to Peter: after embracing him with all a son's fondness, which for a moment lost the repressing idea that he

might have offended by his truancy; after recounting in a few hasty sentences, the events which had brought him to be a companion of Sir William Wallace, and to avenge the injuries of Scotland in Ayr; he knocked off the chains of his father. And eager to perform the like service to all who had suffered in the like manner, accompanied by the happy Ruthven (who gazed with delight on his son, treading so early the path of glory,) he hastened around to the other dungeons, and gladly proclaimed to the astonished inmates freedom and safety. Having rid them of their shackles; he had just entered with his noble company into the vaulted chamber which contained Lord Dundaff, when the peaceful clarion sounded. At the happy tidings, Graham started on his feet: "Now, my father, you shall see the bravest of men!"

"Remember we are *twins* in happiness!" cried Edwin: "Our fathers must meet him together."—So saying, he hastened

forward; and the chiefs following, entered on the platform, just as Wallace stood in the midst of the Southrons, receiving their vows of honour.

Morning was spreading in pale light over the heavens, and condensing with its cold breath the grey smoke which still ascended in volumes from the burning ruins; when Wallace, turning round at the glad voice of Edwin, beheld the released nobles. This was the first time that he had ever seen the lords Dundaff and Ruthven; but several of the others he remembered having met at the decision of the crowns, when Baliol was elected, to the woe of Scotland. While he was cordially welcoming, and receiving to his friendship the men to whom his valour had given freedom, how great was his surprise to see in one, who now appeared between Ker and a soldier, Sir John Monteith, the young chieftain whom he had parted with a few months ago at Douglas; and from whose fatal invitation to that

place, he might well date the ruin of his dearest happiness!

"We found Sir John Monteith amongst the slain before the palace," said Ker. "In obeying your commands to seek for the survivors, we discovered him; he, of the whole party, alone breathed; I knew him instantly.—How he came there, I know not; but I brought him hither, to explain to yourself, while I accomplish my task." Ker withdrew to finish the interment of the dead. And Sir John, still leaning on the soldier, grasped Wallace's hand: "My brave friend!" cried he; "to owe my liberty to you is a two-fold pleasure; for," added he, in a lowered voice, "I see before me the man, who is to verify the words of Baliol; and be, not only the guardian, but the possessor of the treasure he committed to our care!"

Wallace, who had never cast a thought on the box, since he knew it was under the protection of Saint Fillan, shook his head:—"A far different meed do I seek,

my friend!" said he: "To behold the happy countenances of my liberated countrymen, is greater reward to me, than would be the developement of all the splendid mysteries which the head of Baliol could devise; and the brave addition which your rescued selves make to the Scots in arms, is worth all the mines of India with which he might think to repay their valour."

"Ay!" cried Dundaff, who overheard this part of the conversation; "we invited the usurpation of a tyrant, by the docility with which we submitted to his minion. Had we rejected Baliol, we had never been ridden by Edward. But it seems the Scots must be goaded to the quick before they feel they have a taskmaster. That has now been done; the rowel has entered all our sides: and who is there amongst us, that will not lay ourselves and our fortunes at the command of Sir William Wallace?"

"If all held our cause in the light that

you do;" returned Wallace; "the blood of our fathers, which these Southrons have sown, would rise up in ten thousand armed legions to overwhelm their murderers!"

"But how," inquired he, turning to Monteith, "did you happen to be in Ayr at this period? And how, above all, amongst the slaughtered Southrons at the palace-gate?"

Sir John Monteith readily replied: "My adverse fate accounts for all." He then proceeded to inform Wallace, that on the very night in which they had parted at Douglas, Sir Arthur Heselrigge was told the story of the box; and that accordingly he sent to have Monteith brought prisoner to Lanerk. He lay in the dungeons of the citadel at the very time Wallace entered that town and destroyed the governor. Though the Scots did not pursue the advantage offered by the transient panic in which this retribution threw their enemies; care was

taken by the English lieutenant, to prevent a repetition of the same disaster; and in consequence, every suspected person was seized, and those already in confinement, were loaded with double chains. Monteith being known as a friend of Sir William Wallace, was sent under a strong guard towards Stirling; there to stand his trial before Cressingham and the Justiciary Ormsby: "But by a lucky chance," said he, "I made my escape while my guards slept.—However, I was soon retaken by another party, and conveyed to Ayr; where the lieutenant-governor, Arnulf, being fond of music, and discovering my talents in that art, compelled me to sing at his entertainments. For this purpose, he last night confined me in the banquetting-room at the palace; and thus, when the flames surrounded that building, I found myself exposed to die the death of a traitor, though then the most oppressed of all

the Scots.—Snatching up a sword, and striving to join my brave countrymen, the Southrons impeded my passage, and I fell under their arms."

Sir William Wallace, happy to have rescued his old acquaintance from further mortifications, committed him to Edwin to lead into the citadel.—As he gave these directions, he took the colours of Edward from the ground, (where the Southron officer had laid them,) and giving them to Sir Alexander Scrymgeour, ordered him to fill their former station, on the citadel, with the standard of Scotland. This action he considered as the seal of each victory; as the badge which, seen from afar, shewed the desolate Scots where to find a protector; and from what ground to start, when courage would prompt them to assert their rights. The standard was no sooner raised, than the proud clarion of triumph was blown from every warlike instrument in the garrison;

and the Southron captain placing himself at the head of his disarmed troops; under the escort of Murray, marched out of the castle. His design was to proceed immediately to Newcastle, and there embark with his men to join their King in Flanders. Not more than two hundred followed their officer in this expedition; for not more were English: the rest, to nearly double that number, being like the garrison of Dumbarton, Irish and Welsh, were glad to escape enforced servitude. Some, parted off in divisions, to return to their respective countries; and a few, whose energetic spirits preferred a life of warfare in the cause of a country struggling for freedom, before returning to submit to the oppressors of their own, inlisted under the banners of Wallace. These recruits, amounting to about a hundred strong fighting men, he put under the command of Sir John Graham.

Some other necessary regulations being

made, he dismissed the victorious Scots to find refreshment in the well-stored barracks of the dispersed Southrons; and retired himself, to rejoin his friends in the citadel.

CHAP. XIII.

IN the course of an hour Murray returned with the information, that he had seen the departing Southrons beyond the barriers of the town. But he approached not Wallace alone; he was accompanied by Lord Auckinleck, the son of one of the betrayed barons who had fallen in the palace of Ayr. This young chieftain, at the head of his vassals, came to support the man whose dauntless hand had thus satisfied his revenge; and when he met Murray at the north gate of the town, and recognised in his flying

banner, a friend of Scotland, he was happy to make himself known to an officer of Wallace, and to be conducted to that chief.

As Lord Andrew and his new colleague made the range of the suburbs, according to the orders he had received from his general, he told the troops which had been left to guard their avenues, that they were commanded to march to the citadel. The glad progress of the victor Scots through the streets, turned the whole aspect of that late gloomy city. Doors and windows, so lately closed in deep mourning for the sanguinary deeds done in the palace, now opened, teeming with gay inhabitants. The general joy penetrated to the most remote recesses. Mothers, now threw their fond arms around the necks of the children whom they had lately regarded with the averted eyes of despair: in the one sex, they then beheld the devoted victims of perhaps the next requisition for blood; and

in the other, the hapless prey of passions more fell than the horrid rage of the beast of the field. But now all was secure again. These terrific tyrants were driven hence; and the happy parent embracing her children, as if restored to her from the grave, implored a thousand blessings on the head of Wallace, the dispenser of all this good.

Sons who in secret had lamented the treacherous death of their fathers, and brothers of their brothers, now opened their gates, and joined the valiant troops in the streets. Widowed wives, and fatherless daughters, almost forgot that they had been bereaved of their natural protectors, when they saw Scotland rescued from her enemies, and her armed sons once more walking in the broad day, masters of themselves and of their liberties.

Thus, then, with every heart rejoicing, every house teeming with numbers to swell the ranks of Wallace, did he, the

day after he had entered Ayr, see all arranged for its peaceful establishment. Having placed formidable garrisons in the citadel, and suburbs, composed of its own youth and the adjacent peasantry, he prepared to proceed on his march. But ere he bade that town adieu, in which he had been educated; and where almost every man remembered his boyish years, and thronged around him with recollection of former days; one duty demanded his stay: to pay funeral honours to the remains of his beloved grandfather.

Accordingly the time was fixed: and with every solemnity due to his virtues and his rank, Sir Ronald Crawford was buried in the chapel of the citadel. It was not a scene of mere ceremonious mourning: as he had been the father of the fatherless, he was followed to the grave by many an orphan's tears; and as he had been the protector of the distressed in every degree; a procession long, and full of la-

mentation, conducted his shrouded corse to its earthly rest. The mourning families of the chiefs who had fallen in the same bloody theatre with himself, closed the sad retinue; and while the holy rites committed his body to the ground, the sacred mass was extended to those who had been plunged into the weltering element.

Several of the name of Crawford, and of the kindred of Wallace, were present. To these he resigned the lands he inherited from his ([aa]) grandfather; and while he confided the aged Elspa and her sister to the care of Sir Reginald Crawford, (to whom he had given Loudon and Monktown kirk,) "Cousin," said he, "you are a valiant and a humane man! —I leave you to be the representative of your venerable uncle: to cherish these poor women whom he loved; to be the protector of the people, and the defender of the suburbs. The citadel is under the command of the Baron of Auckinleck,

who, with his brave followers, was the first to hail the burning of the accursed Barns of Ayr."

After this solemnity, and these dispositions, Wallace called a review of his troops; and found that he could leave five hundred men at Ayr, and march an army of at least two thousand out of it. His present design was to take his course to Berwick; and by seizing every castle of strength in his way, form a chain of works across the country, which would not only bulwark Scotland against any farther inroads from its enemies, but render the subjugation of the interior Southron garrisons more certain and easy. While he pursued his conquests, it would not be difficult for his troops, (thus planted) by excursions, to clear Annandale and Roxburghshire of the enemy; and so make the Cheviot hills and the ocean the boundaries of Edward's usurpation.

With this design, Wallace, on the third morning after he had entered Ayr, quitted

that town; and marching over its far-stretching hills, manned every watch-tower on their summits; for now, whithersoever he moved, he found his victories had preceded him; and all, from hall and hovel, turned out to greet and offer him their services. Thus, heralded by fame, he crossed by Muir-kirk to Douglas castle.

He no sooner summoned it to surrender, than the Southron governor, (who had been apprized by fugitives, of the late events at Ayr, hearing from the pursuivant who brought the requisition, that he was called upon to resign the keys of Douglas to Sir William Wallace,) beheld, in his panic-struck fancy, the castle stormed, and in flames. Believing that all would be sacrificed to the young warrior's vengeance, should any resistance be offered, he consented to surrender; and laying down his arms before Wallace, the castle was relinquished into his hands.

This advantage gained, he did not stay

longer than to take the usual oaths of the troops: and as a hostage for the performance of their engagement, he detained the governor in his possession. Sir Eustace Maxwell took the command of Douglas; and Monteith, (whose wounds demanded rest) remained as his lieutenant. Wallace, satisfied of the zeal of both his officers, left them securely; and proceeding across Couthboanlaw to the Pentland hills, possessed himself, after little resistance, of the castles of Peebles, of Nidpath, and of Traquair, in Tweed dale: and though he met a firmer opposition as he approached the coast, he compelled all to surrender to him, which lay between the western borders of the Merse and the walls of Berwick.

Arrived before these blood-stained towers, which had so often been the subjects of dispute between the powers of England and of Scotland, he prepared for their immediate attack. Berwick being a valuable fortress to the enemy,

not only as a key to the invaded kingdom, but a point, whence, by his ships, he commanded the whole of the eastern coast of Scotland; Wallace expected that a desperate stand would here be made to stop the progress of his arms. But being aware, that the most expeditious mode of warfare was the best adapted to promote his cause, he first took the town by assault, and having driven the garrison into the citadel, assailed them by a vigorous siege. It had lasted not more than ten days, when Wallace foreseeing that his enemies might be reinforced with little difficulty, did their ships continue to command the harbour, resolved upon a stratagem to gain them also into his possession. Accordingly, he found among his own troops, many men who had been used to a sea-faring life. These he sent, disguised as fugitive Southrons, in boats to the ships which lay in the roads. The feint took; and by these means seizing upon the vessels nearest to the town, he manned them with

his own people; and going out with them himself, in three days made himself master of every ship on the coast.

By this manœuvre the situation of the besieged was rendered so hopeless, that no mode of escape was left but by desperate sallies. They made them, but without other effect than weakening their strength and increasing their miseries. Wallace was aware of all their resolutions; for knowing what would be best for them to do in their situation, he needed no better spy over their actions than his own judgment. Foiled in every attempt; as their opponent, guessing their intentions, was prepared at every point to meet their different essays; and losing men at every rencontre, their governor stood without resource. Without provisions, without aid of any kind for his wounded men, and hourly annoyed by the victorious Scots; (who, by showers of arrows and other missile weapons, which they continued to throw from the

towers and springalls with which they overtopped the walls, suffered not the besieged to rest day or night) the unhappy Earl of Gloucester was ready to rush upon death, to avoid the disgrace of surrendering the fortress. Every soul in the garrison was reduced to similar despair. Wallace had found means to dam up the spring, which, by running under a particular tract of land, usually supplied the citadel with water. The common men, famished with hunger, smarting with their wounds, and now perishing with unextinguishable thirst, threw themselves at the feet of their officers, imploring them to represent to the governor, that if he longer held out, he must defend the place alone, for that they could not exist another day, under their present sufferings.

The governor now repented of the rashness with which he had thrown himself, unprovisioned, into the citadel. He now saw that expectation was no apology

for want of precaution. When his first division had been overpowered in the assault of the town, his evil genius suggested, that it was best to take the second unbroken into the citadel, and there await the arrival of a reinforcement by sea. But he had beheld the ships which defended the harbour, seized by Wallace before his eyes! Hope was then crushed; and nothing but death or dishonour seemed to be his alternatives. Cut to the soul at the recollection of his want of judgment in having so hastily thrown himself into the castle, he determined to retrieve his fame, by washing out that error with his blood. To fall, then, under the ruins of Berwick castle was his resolution. Such was the state of his mind, when the officers appeared with the petition of his men. In proportion as they felt the extremities into which they were driven, the offence he had committed, glared with tenfold enormity in his eyes; and with wild despair he told them,

"they might do as they would; but for his part, the moment they opened the gates to the enemy, that moment should be the last of his life. He, that was the son-in-law of King Edward, would never yield his sword to a Scottish rebel."

Terrified at these threats on himself, the soldiers, who loved their general, declared themselves willing to die with him; and, therefore, as a last effort, determined to make a mine under the principal tower of the Scots; and by setting fire to it, at least destroy the means by which they feared their enemies would storm the citadel.

Wallace, as he kept his station on the tower, observing numbers of the besieged passing behind a mound, in a direction to the tower where he stood, concluded what was their design; and ordering a counter-mine to be made;—what he anticipated, happened; and Murray, at the head of his miners, encountered those of the castle, at the very moment they would have

set fire to the combustibles which were to consume the tower. The struggle was violent, but short; for the impetuous Scots drove their amazed and enfeebled adversaries through the aperture into the centre of the citadel. At this instant, Wallace, with a band of resolute men, sprung from the tower upon the walls; and while they were almost deserted by their late guardians, (who had quitted them to assist in repelling the foe below,) he leaped into the midst of the conflict, and the battle became general. It was decisive. For Wallace, beholding the undaunted resolution with which the weakened and dying men supported the cause their governor was determined to defend, found his admiration and his pity alike excited; and even while his men seemed to have every man's life in his hands; when one instant more, would make him the undisputed master of the castle, (for not a Southron would then breathe to dispute it) he resolved to stop the carnage.

At the moment when a gallant officer, who, having assaulted him with the vehemence of despair, now lay disarmed and under him; at that moment, when the discomfited knight exclaimed, "In mercy strike, and redeem the honour of Ralph De Monthermer!"(bb) Wallace raised his bugle and sounded the note of peace. Every sword was arrested; and the universal clangor of battle was lost in expecting silence.

"Rise, brave earl;" cried he, to the governor; "I revere virtue too sincerely, to take an unworthy advantage of my fortune. The valour of this garrison commands my respect; and as a proof of my sincerity, I grant to it, what I have never yet done to any: That yourself, and these dauntless men, march out with the honours of war; and without any bonds on your future conduct towards us. We leave it to your own hearts, to decide, whether you will ever again be made instruments to enchain a free and brave people."

While he was speaking, De Monthermer leaned gloomily on the sword he had returned to him, with his eyes fixed on his men. They answered his glance with looks that seemed to say they understood him; and passing a few words in whispers to each other, one at last spoke aloud:—"Decide for us earl. We are as ready to die as to live, so that we may be in neither divided from you."

At this generous declaration, the proud despair of De Monthermer gave way to nobler feelings; and while a big tear stood in each eye, he turned to Wallace, and stretching out his hand to him; "Noble Scot," said he, "your unexampled generosity, and the invincible fidelity of these heroic men, have compelled me to accept the life I had resolved to lose under these walls rather than resign them. But virtue is resistless: and to it do I surrender that pride of soul, which made existence insufferable

under the consciousness of having erred. When I became the husband of King Edward's daughter, I believed myself pledged to victories or to death. But there is a conquest, and I feel it, greater than over hosts in the field;—and here taught to make it, the husband of the Princess of England, the proud Earl of Gloucester, consents to live to be a monument of Scottish nobleness, and of the inflexible fidelity of English soldiers."

"You live, illustrious and virtuous Englishman," returned Wallace, "to redeem that honour, of which the rapacious sons of England had robbed their country. Go forth, therefore, as my conqueror; for you have, in this spot, extinguished that burning antipathy, with which the outraged heart of William Wallace, had vowed to extirpate every Southron from off this ravaged land. Honour, brave earl, makes all men brethren; and as a brother I open these gates for you to repass into your country.

When there, if you ever remember William Wallace, let it be as a man who fights not for conquest, nor renown: but to restore Scotland to her rights; and then to resign his sword in peace."

"I shall remember you, Sir William Wallace!" returned De Monthermer; "and as pledge of it, you shall never see me again in this country, till I come an embassador of that peace for which you fight. But meanwhile, in the moment of hot contention for the rights which you believe wrested from you, do you remember, that they have not been so much the spoil of my royal father's ambition, as of the traffic of your own venal nobles. Had I not believed that Scotland was unworthy of freedom, I should never have appeared upon her borders: but now that I see she has brave hearts within her, who not only resist oppression, but know how to wield power, I shrink from the zeal I shewed to rivet her chains, (for I even volunteered to occupy this station, so

unworthy my rank ;) and I repeat, that never again shall my hostile foot impress this land."

These sentiments were answered in the same spirit by his soldiers. And the Scots, following the example of their leader, treated them with every kindness. After dispensing amongst them provisions, and appointing horses, and other means, to convey the wounded in comfort; Wallace bade a cordial farewel to the Earl of Gloucester; and his men conducted their reconciled enemies safe over the Tweed. There they parted. The English bent their course towards London, and the Scots returned to their victorious general.

CHAP. XIV.

THE happy effects of these rapid conquests were soon apparent. The fall of Berwick excited such a confidence in the minds of the neighbouring chieftains, that every hour brought fresh recruits to Wallace. Every mouth was full of the praises of the young conqueror; every eye was eager to catch a glimpse of his person; and while the men were emulous to share his glory; the women, in their secret bowers, put up prayers for the preservation of one so handsome and so brave.

Amongst the many who, of every rank and age, hastened to pay their respects to the deliverer of Berwick, was Sir Richard Maitland of Thirlestane; a veteran of such celebrity, that he was known by the title of the *Stalwarth Knight of Lauder*.

dale.[cc] Hearing of Wallace's mighty deeds, Sir Richard determined to see the brave grandson of his old friend, the treacherously murdered Sir Ronald Crawford. He sought him, not only in this light, but as an object fraught with every cause of interest; as the champion of Scotland, as the benefactor of mankind. Months ago he had been informed of Lord Mar's obligations to Wallace; and of the subsequent imprisonment of the Earl. But now, when he found that the resistless chief had not only freed Lord Mar, but had seized the fetters of Scotland at Dumbarton; and that, after forming a wall across his country, (stronger than those of Agricola and Adrian,) a rampart of determined Scots; he had gained possession of the eastern sea:— when Maitland heard all this, new blood seemed to flow in his aged veins; and he who had not mounted a horse for twenty years, now bestrode a proud charger, to go as became a knight, to pay his duty to the hope of his country.

Wallace was no sooner told of the approach of the venerable knight of Thirlestane, than he set forth to bid him welcome. At sight of the deliverer of Scotland, Sir Richard threw himself off his horse with a military grace that would have become even youthful years; and hastening towards Wallace, clasped him in his arms.

"Let me look on thee!" cried the old knight; "let me feast my eyes on the brave Scot who again raises this hoary head, which has so long bent in shame for its dishonoured country!" As he spoke he viewed Wallace from head to foot. "I knew Sir Ronald Crawford and thy valiant father;" continued he: "O! had they lived to see this day! But the base murder of the one, thou hast nobly avenged; and the honourable grave of the other on Loudon hill,(dd) thou wilt cover with the monument of thine own glories. Low are laid my own children in this land of strife; but in thee I see

a son of Scotland, that is to dry all our tears."

He embraced Wallace again and again. And as the venerable chieftain's overflowing heart rendered him garrulous, he expatiated on the energy with which the young victor had pursued his conquests; and paralleled them with the brilliant actions he had seen in his youth. While he thus discoursed, Wallace drew him towards the castle; and there presented to him the two nephews of the Earl of Mar.

He paid some warm compliments to Edwin on his early success in the career of glory; and then turning to Murray, "Ay!" said he, "it is joy to me to see the valiant house of Bothwell in the third generation. Thy grandfather and myself were boys together at the coronation of Alexander the second; and that is eighty years ago. Since then, what have I not seen! the death of two noble Scottish kings: our blooming princes ravished

from us by untimely fates: the throne sold to a coward; and at last seized by a foreign power!—And in my own person! I have been the father of as brave and beauteous a family as ever blessed a parent's eye:—but they are all torn from me. Two of my sons sleep on the plain of Dunbar; my third, my dauntless William, since that fatal day, has been kept a prisoner in England. And my daughters, the tender blossoms of my aged years; they grew around me the fairest lilies of the land: but they too are passed away. The one, scorning the mere charms of youth, and preferring an union with a soul that had long conversed with superior regions, loved the sage of Ercildown. But my friend lost this rose of his bosom, and I the child of my heart, ere she had been a year his wife. Then was my last and only daughter married to the Lord Mar; and in giving birth to my dear Isabella, she too died.—Ah, my good young knight, were it not for that

sweet child, the living image of her mother, who in the very spring of youth was cropt and fell; I should be alone:—and my hoary head would descend to the grave unwept, unregretted!"

The joy of the old man having recalled such melancholy remembrances, he wept upon the shoulder of Edwin, who, interested in the sad detail, had drawn so near that the story which was begun to Murray, was ended to him. Wallace, to give the mourning father time to recover his composure, walked towards the other lords who were conversing in an opposite part of the room. At that moment Ker entered and told him that a youth had just arrived from Stirling with a sealed packet, which he would deliver into no hands but those of Sir William Wallace. At this intimation, Wallace, turning to Ruthven and Dundaff, requested them to shew every attention to the Lord of Thirlestane during his absence, and left the apartment.

On his entering the anti-room, the messenger sprung forwards; but suddenly checking himself, he stood, as if irresolute what to say.

"This is Sir William Wallace, young man;" said Ker; "deliver your embassy."

At these words the youth pulled a packet from his bosom, and putting it into the chief's hand, retired in confusion. Wallace gave orders to Ker to take care of him; and then turned to inspect its contents. He wondered from whom it could come; as he knew no Scot in Stirling, who would dare to write to him, while it was possessed by the enemy. But not losing a moment in conjecture, he broke the seal.

How was he startled at the first words! and how was every energy of his heart roused to redoubled action when he turned to the signature! The first words in the letter were these:—

"A daughter, trembling for the life of

her father, condemned to die, presumes to address Sir William Wallace."—The signature was "Helen Mar."—He began the letter again.

"A daughter, trembling for the life of her father, condemned to die, presumes to address Sir William Wallace. You have been his deliverer from the sword, from chains, and from the waves. Refuse not again to save him, to whom you have so often given life; and hasten, brave Wallace, to preserve the Earl of Mar from the scaffold.

"A cruel deception brought him from the Isle of Bute, where you imagined you had left him in security. Lord Aymer De Valence, in escaping a second time from your sword, fled under covert of the night from Ayr to Stirling. Cressingham, the rapacious robber of all our castles, found in him an apt coadjutor. They concerted how to avenge the late disgraces of Earl De Valence; and Cressingham, eager to enrich himself, while

he flattered the resentments of his commander, suggested, that you, Sir William Wallace, our deliverer, and their scourge, would most easily be made to feel through the bosoms of your friends. They therefore determined, by a mock trial, to condemn my father to death: and thus while they distress you, put themselves in possession of his lands and wealth with the semblance of justice.

"The substance of this most unrighteous debate was communicated to me by Lord Aymer De Valence himself: he thought to excuse his part in the affair, by proving to me how insensible he is to the principles which move a patriot and a man of honour.

"To this end, these arch-enemies of our country, (having learnt from some too well-informed spy, that Lord Mar had retired in peaceful obscurity to Bute,) sent a body of men, disguised as Scots, to Gourock. There they stopped; and dispatched a messenger into the island, to

inform Lord Mar, that Sir William Wallace having driven the Southrons out of Ayr, was waiting to converse with him on the banks of the frith. My noble father, unsuspicious of treachery; and thinking he was going to meet the friend in whom he gloried, hurried to obey the summons. Lady Mar accompanied him; and so both fell into the snare.

"He was brought a prisoner to Stirling, where another affliction awaited him:—he was to see his daughter and sister in captivity.

"After I had been betrayed from St. Fillan's monastery, by the falsehoods of one Scottish knight; and rescued from his power by the gallantry of another; I sought the protection of my aunt, Lady Ruthven, who then dwelt at Alloa on the banks of the Forth.(ee) Her husband had been invited to Ayr by some treacherous requisition of the governor Arnulf; and with many other lords was thrown into prison. Report says, bravest of men!

that you have given freedom to my betrayed uncle.—I speak from report alone; for we are too closely watched in this citadel, to be able to receive any messenger he might have sent.

"According to the plan of our tyrants, the moment Lord Ruthven's person was secured, his estates were seized; and my aunt and myself being found at Alloa, (a castle which she had brought to him in dowry,) we were carried prisoners to this city. Alas! we had no valiant arm to preserve us from our enemies! Lady Ruthven's first-born son was slain in the fatal day of Dunbar; and in terror of the like fate she has placed her eldest surviving boy in a convent. Some days after our arrival, my dear father was brought to Stirling. Though a captive in the town, I was not then confined to any closer durance than the walls. While he was yet passing through the streets, rumour told my aunt, that the Scottish lord, then leading to prison, was her beloved

brother. She flew to me in an agony, to tell me the dreadful tidings. I heard no more, saw no more, till having rushed into the streets, and bursting through every obstacle of crowd and soldiers, I found myself clasped in my father's arms —in his shackled arms!—What a moment was that! Where was Sir William Wallace in that hour? Where the brave unknown knight, who had sworn to me, to die in my father's defence? Both were absent, and he was in chains.

"My grief and distraction baffled the attempts of the guards to part us: and what became of me I know not, till I found myself lying on a couch, attended by many women, and supported by my aunt. When I had recovered to lamentation and to tears, my aunt told me I was in the apartments of the Deputy Warden. He, with Cressingham, having gone out to meet the man they had so basely drawn into their toils, De Valence himself saw the struggles of paternal af-

fection, contending against the men who would have torn a senseless daughter from his arms; and yet he, merciless man! separated us, and sent me, with my aunt, a prisoner to his house.

"The next day a packet was put into my aunt's hands, containing a few precious lines from my father to me; and a letter from the Countess to Lady Ruthven, telling her of all your goodness to her and to my father; and at last narrating the cruel manner in which they had been ravished from the asylum in which you had placed them. She then said, that could she find means of apprizing you of the danger in which she and her husband were now involved, she was sure you would fly to their rescue. Whether she have ever found these means, I know not; for all communication between us was immediately rendered impracticable. The messenger that brought my aunt the packet, was a good Southron who had been won by Lady Mar's entreaties. But

on his quitting our apartments, he was seized by a servant of De Valence, who having descried him steal rather mysteriously into my aunt's chamber, by listening found his errand, and made him prisoner the moment he appeared from the door. The poor man was the same day put publicly to death, in order to intimidate all others from the like compassion on the sufferings of unhappy Scotland. Oh! Sir William Wallace! will not your sword at last reach these men of blood!

"But to return. Earl de Valence compelled my aunt to yield the packet to him. We had already read it, therefore did not regret it on that head; but we feared the information it might give relative to you, our benefactor. In consequence of this circumstance, I was made a closer prisoner than before. But captivity could have no terrors for me, did it not divide me from my father. And, grief on grief! what words have I to write

it? they have CONDEMNED HIM TO DIE! That fatal letter of my step-mother's was brought out against him; and as your adherent, Sir William Wallace, they have sentenced him to lose his head.

"I have knelt to Earl de Valence; I have implored my father's life at his hands; but to no purpose. He tells me that Cressingham at his side, and Ormsby by letters from Scone, declare it necessary that an execution of consequence must be made, to appal the discontented Scots; and that, as no lord is esteemed greater in Scotland, than the Earl of Mar, *he must die!*

"Hasten then, my father's preserver and friend! hasten to save him!—Oh, fly, for the sake of the country he loves; for the sake of the hapless beings dependant on his protection!—I shall be on my knees till I hear your trumpet before the walls; for in you and Heaven, now rest all the hopes of Helen Mar."

A cold dew stood on the limbs of

Wallace as he closed the letter. It might be too late? The sentence was passed on the Earl, and his executioners were prompt as cruel: the axe might already have fallen!

Struck with this terror, he called to Ker, and ordered that the messenger should be brought in. He entered. Wallace inquired how long he had been in bringing the packet from Stirling. The youth replied, only thirty-four hours; adding, that he had travelled night and day, for fear the news of the risings in Annandale, and the taking of Berwick, should precipitate the Earl's death.

"I accompany you this instant," cried Wallace. And giving orders to Ker that the troops should immediately get under arms; he returned into the room where he had left the knight of Thirlestane.

"Sir Richard Maitland," said he, willing to avoid exciting his alarm; "there is more work for us at Stirling. Lord Aymer de Valence has again escaped the death

we thought had overtaken him; and he is now in that citadel.—I have just received a summons thither, which I must obey." At these last words, Sir Roger Kirkpatrick, who had hastened forward at the word Stirling, gave a shout, and rushed from the apartment. Wallace looked after him for a moment, and then continued—" Follow us with your prayers, Sir Richard; and I shall not despair of sending blessed tidings to the banks of the Leeder."

" What has happened?" inquired Murray, who saw that something more than the escape of De Valence, had been imparted to his general.

" We must spare this good old man," returned he, " and have him conducted to his home before I declare it publicly; but the Earl of Mar is again a prisoner, and in Stirling."

Murray, who instantly comprehended his uncle's danger, speeded the departure of Sir Richard; and as Wallace held his

stirrup, the chief laid his hand on his head, and blessed him: "The prophet of Ercildown is too ill to bring his benediction himself, but I breathe it over this heroic brow!" The bridle being in the hand of Lord Andrew, he led the horse out of the eastern gate of the town; and there taking leave of the veteran knight, turned on his way; and soon rejoined Wallace in the midst of his chieftains.

He had informed them of the Earl of Mar's danger; and of the policy, as well as justice, of rescuing so powerful and patriotic a nobleman from the death his enemies threatened. Lord Ruthven needed no arguments to precipitate him forward in the service of the beloved brother of his wife; and the anxieties of the affectionate Edwin were all awake when he knew that his mother was a prisoner. Lord Andrew smiled proudly, when he returned his cousin's letter to Wallace: "We shall have the rogue on the nail, yet;" said he: "my uncle's brave head

is not ordained to fall by the stroke of such a coward!"

"So I believe:" replied Wallace, and then turning to Lord Dundaff; "My lord," said he, "I leave you governor of Berwick."

The veteran warrior grasped Wallace's hand.—"To be your representative in this fortress, is the proudest station this war-worn frame hath ever filled.—My son, must be my representative with you in the field." He waved Sir John Graham towards him; the young knight advanced; and Lord Dundaff, placing his hands upon his shield, said, "Swear that as this defends the body, you will ever strive to cover Scotland from her enemies; and that from this hour, you will be the faithful friend and follower of Sir William Wallace!"

"I swear," returned Graham, kissing the (ff) shield.—Wallace pressed his hand: "I have brothers around me, rather than what the world calls friends! And with

such valour, such fidelity to aid me, can I be otherwise than a victor?"

Edwin, who stood near at this rite of generous enthusiasm, softly whispered to Wallace as he turned towards his troops; "But amongst all these brothers, cease not to remember that Edwin was your first.—Ah, my beloved general, what Jonathan was to David I would be to thee!"

Wallace looked on him with penetrating tenderness; his heart was suddenly wrung by a recollection which the words of Edwin had recalled. "But thy *love, passes not the love of woman*, Edwin!"—"No, but it equals it," replied he; "what has been done for thee, I would do; only love me as David did Jonathan, and I shall be the happiest of the happy."—"Be happy then; dear boy!" answered Wallace; "for all that ever beat in human breast for friend or brother, lives in my heart for thee."

At that moment Sir John Graham re-

joined them; and some other captains coming up, Wallace made the proper military dispositions, and every man took his station at the head of his division.

Until the men had marched far beyond the chance of rumours from them reaching Thirlestane, they were not informed of the Earl of Mar's danger. They conceived that their present errand was the re-capture of De Valence. "But at a proper moment," said Wallace, "they shall know the whole truth: for," added he, "as it is a law of equity that what concerns all should be approved by all; and that common dangers should be repelled by united efforts; the people who follow our standards not as hirelings, but with willing spirits, ought to know our reasons for requiring their services."

"They who follow you," said Graham, "have too much confidence in their leader to require any reasons for his movements."

"It is to place that confidence on a sure

foundation, my brave friend;" returned Wallace; "that I explain what there is no just reason to conceal. Should policy ever compel me to strike a blow without previously telling my agents wherefore, I should then draw upon their faith; and expect that confidence in my honour and arms, which I now place on their discretion and fidelity."

It was noon when they set forth. The veteran band which Wallace had brought from Dumbarton led the way; while an army of five thousand men, officered by the bravest chieftains of the Merse, Tweed dale, and the Lothians, followed, with streaming banners, across Lauderdale to Lammermuir. At the top of Soutra hill Wallace halted; and there informed his soldiers of Lord Mar's perilous situation, and of the necessity for forced marches, if they would save Scotland from the disgrace of allowing one of her bravest nobles to die by the hand of the executioner.

Exordiums were not requisite to nerve every limb, and to strengthen every heart in the toilsome journey. Mountains were climbed, vast plains traversed, rivers forded, and precipices crossed, without one man in the ranks lingering on his steps, or dropping his head upon his pike to catch a moment's slumber. Those who had fought with Wallace, longed to redouble their fame under his command; and they who had recently embraced his standard, panted with a virtuous ambition to rival these first-born in arms.

Sir Roger Kirkpatrick had been the first to fly to arms on the march to Stirling being mentioned; and now, when Wallace stood forward to declare that rest should be dispensed with till Stirling fell, the ardent knight, full of a fierce joy, that seemed to see his revenge and redeemed honour at once in his grasp, darted over every obstacle to reach his aim. He flew to the van of his troops, and hailing them forward: "Come on!"

cried he, "and in the blood of Cressingham let us for ever sink King Edward's Scottish crown!"

The shouts of the men, who seemed to drink in the spirit that blazed from Kirkpatrick's eyes, made the echoes of Lammermuir ring with a strange noise. It was the voice of liberty. And leaping every bound; and with prodigious perseverance dragging their war-machines in their rear, did they pursue their way, till they reached the Carron side. At the moment the foaming steed of Wallace, smoking with the labours of a long and rapid march, was plunging into the stream to take the ford, Ker, (who was the avenue through which every dispatch reached his general,) took the horse by the bridle:—"My lord," said he, "a man on full speed from Douglas castle has brought this packet."

Wallace opened it and read as follows:—

"The patriots in Annandale have been

beaten by Lord de Warenne; and Sir John Monteith (who volunteered to head them,) is taken prisoner with twelve hundred men.

"Earl de Warenne, as Lord Warden of Scotland, comes to assume his power, and to relieve his deputy, Lord Aymer de Valence, who is recalled to take possession of the Earldom of Pembroke. In pursuance of his supposed duty, Earl de Warenne is now marching rapidly towards the Lothians in the hope of intercepting you in your conquests.

"Thanks to the regular information which you send us of your movements, that we can thus transmit accounts of what may arise to impede your progress! I should have attempted to have checked the Southrons by annoying their rear, had not De Warenne's numbers, amounting to 60,000 strong, rendered such an enterprise, on my part, hopeless. His whole aim being to come up with you; if you beat him in the van, we shall

have him in the rear; and he must be surrounded and cut to pieces. Surely the tree you planted in Dumbarton, is not now to be blasted!—Ever my General's and Scotland's true servant,

"Eustace Maxwell."

"What answer?" inquired Ker.

Wallace hastily engraved with his dagger's point upon his gauntlet, "Reviresco! (88)—My sun is above!" and desiring that it might be given to the messenger to carry to Sir Eustace Maxwell, he refixed himself in his saddle, and spurred over the Carron.

The moon was at her meridian just as the wearied troops halted on the deep shadows of the Carse of Stirling. All around them lay in wide desolation: the sword and the fire had been there; not in declared warfare, but under the darkness of midnight, and impelled by rapacity or wantonness; and from the base of the rock, even to the foot of the Clackmannan hills, all lay a smoking wilderness.

An hour's rest was sufficient to restore every exhausted power to the limbs of the determined followers of Wallace. And as the morning dawned, the sentinels on the ramparts of the town were surprised to find that the Scots, by the most indefatigable labour, had not only passed the ditch, but having gained the counterscarp, had fixed their moveable towers, and were at that instant overlooking the highest bastions. The mangonels and petraries, and other implements for battering walls; and the ballista, with every efficient means of throwing missive weapons, were ready to discharge their artillery upon the heads of the besieged.

At a sight so unexpected, which seemed to have arisen out of the earth like an exhalation, (with such silence and expedition had the Scottish operations been commenced) the Southrons, struck with dread, fled from the walls; but instantly recovering their presence of mind, they returned, and discharged a cloud of

arrows upon their opponents; a summons, meanwhile, was sent to the citadel to call De Valence and the governor Cressingham to the defence of the garrison. The interior gates now sent forth thousands to the walls: but in proportion to the numbers which approached, the greater was the harvest of death prepared for the terrible arm of Wallace; who, with his tremendous war-wolfs throwing prodigious stones, and his springalls casting forth brazen-winged darts, swept away file after file of the reinforcement. It grieved the noble heart of the Scottish commander to see so many valiant men urged to inevitable destruction; but still they advanced; and that his own might be preserved, they must fall. To shorten the bloody contest, his direful weapons were worked with redoubled energy; and so mortal a shower fell, that the heavens seemed to rain iron. The crushed and stricken enemy, shrinking under the mighty tempest, left their ground.

The ramparts deserted, Wallace sprung from his tower upon the walls. At that moment De Valence, who had suggested the idea of diverting the hot assault of the besiegers, by a sally, opened one of the gates, and at the head of a formidable body charged the nearest Scots. Murray and Graham were prepared to receive him, (for a good soldier is never taken unawares,) and furiously driving him to a retrograde motion, forced him to fall back upon the troops in the town. But there all was confusion. Wallace, with his resolute followers, had already put Cressingham and his legions to flight; and while they, though closely pursued by Kirkpatrick, threw themselves into the castle; the victorious commander-in-chief surrounded the amazed De Valence, who, (finding himself caught in double toils,) called to his men to fight for St. George and their King to their latest gasp.

The brave fellows too strictly obeyed: and while they fell on all sides, pierced

and overwhelmed by their determined opponents; he at last, (fighting with a courage, which horror of Wallace's vengeance for his grandfather's death, and his attempt on his life in the hall at Dumbarton, rendered desperate,) encountered the conquering chieftain arm to arm. Great was the dread of De Valence at this meeting: but death was now all he saw before him, and he resolved, if he must die, that the soul of his enemy should attend him to the other world.

He fought, not with the steady valour of a warrior, determined to vanquish or to die; but with the fury of despair, with the violence of a hyena thirsting for the blood of the man with whom he contended. Drunk with rage, he made a desperate plunge at the heart of Wallace; a plunge, armed with execrations and all his strength: but his sword missed its aim, and entered the side of a youth, who at that moment had thrown himself before his general. Wallace saw where

the deadly blow fell; and instantly closing on the earl with a vengeance in his eyes, which reminded his now determined victim of the horrid vision he had seen in the burning Barns of Ayr; with one grasp of his arm he hurled him to the ground; and setting his foot upon his breast, would have buried his dagger in his heart, had not De Valence dropped his uplifted sword, and with horror in every feature, raised his clasped hands in speechless supplication.

Wallace suspended the blow, and De Valence exclaimed, "My life! this once again, gallant Wallace! By your hopes of heaven, grant me mercy!"

Wallace looked on the trembling recreant, with a glance, which, had he possessed the soul of a man, would have made him grasp at death, rather than deserve a second. "And hast thou escaped me again!" cried Wallace; then turning his indignant eyes from the abject earl, to his bleeding friend, who was lean-

ing on his sword; "I yield him his life, Edwin, and you perhaps are slain?"

"Forget not your own bright principle to avenge me;" said Edwin, gently smiling: "he has only wounded me. But, you are safe, and I hardly feel a smart."

Wallace replaced his dagger in his girdle. "Rise, Lord de Valence: it is my honour, not my will, that grants your life. You threw away your arms! I cannot strike even a murderer, who bares his breast. I give you that mercy you denied to nineteen unoffending, defenceless old men, whose hoary heads, your ruthless axe brought with blood to the ground. Let memory be the sword I have withheld!"

While he spoke, De Valence, who had risen, stood conscience-struck before the majestic mien of Wallace: there was something in his denunciation, that sounded like the irreversible decree of a divinity; and the condemned wretch quaked beneath the threat, while he panted for revenge.

The whole of the survivors in De Valence's train, having surrendered when their leader fell; in a few minutes Wallace was surrounded by his chieftains, bringing in the colours and the swords of their prisoners.

"Sir Alexander Ramsay," said he, to a brave and courteous knight who had joined him in the Lothians; "I confide Earl de Valence to your care. See that he is strongly guarded; and has every respect, according to the honour of him to whom I commit this charge."

Ramsay conveyed his prisoner to an adjacent tower; and placing a double guard over him; stationed himself in an outward apartment, there to watch that the Proteus arts of the earl should not again find a mode of escape.

Meanwhile, as the town was now in possession of the Scots, Wallace, having sent off the captive Southrons to safe quarters, reiterated his persuasions to Edwin to leave the ground and have his

wound dressed.—"No, no;" replied he; "the same hand that gave me this, inflicted a worse on my general at Dumbarton: he kept the field then; and shall I retire now, and disgrace my example? No, my brother; you would not have me so disprove my kindred!"

"Do as you will;" answered Wallace, with a grateful smile; "so that you preserve a life that must never again be risked to save mine. While it is necessary for me to live, my Almighty Captain will shield me: but when his word goes forth that I shall be recalled; it will not be in the power of friendship, nor of hosts, to turn the steel from my breast. Therefore, dearest Edwin, throw not yourself away in defending what is in the hands of Heaven, to be lent, or to be withdrawn at will."

Edwin bowed his modest head; and having suffered a balsam to be poured into his wound, braced his brigandine over his breast; and was again at the side

of his friend, just as he had joined Kirkpatrick before the citadel. The gates were firmly closed: and the dismayed Cressingham, with his troops, were panting behind its walls, as Wallace commanded the parley to be sounded. Cressingham, afraid of trusting himself within arrow-shot of an enemy who he believed conquered by witchcraft, sent his lieutenant upon the walls to answer the summons.

The herald of the Scots demanded the immediate surrender of the place. Cressingham was at that instant informed by a messenger, who had arrived too late the preceding night to be allowed to disturb his slumbers, that De Warenne was approaching with an immense army. Inflated with new confidence, the lately panic-struck governor mounted the wall himself, and in haughty language returned for answer, That *he would fall under the towers of the citadel, before he would surrender to a Scottish rebel.* "And as an

example of the fate which such a delinquent merits," continued he, "I will change the milder sentence passed on Lord Mar, and immediately hang him and all his family on these walls, in sight of your insurgent army."

"Then," cried the herald, "thus says Sir William Wallace: if even one hair on the heads of the Earl of Mar and his family falls with violence to the ground, every Southron soul who has this day surrendered to the Scottish arms, shall lose his head by the axe."

"We are used to the blood of traitors;" cried Cressingham; "and mind not its scent. But the army of Earl de Warenne is at hand: and it is at the peril of all your necks, for the rebel your master to put his threat in execution. Withdraw, or you shall see the dead bodies of Donald Mar and his family fringing these battlements; for no terms do we keep with man, woman, or child, who is linked with treason!"

At these words, an arrow, winged from a hand behind Cressingham, flew directly to the un-visored face of Wallace: but it struck too high, and ringing against his helmet, fell to the ground.

"Treachery!" resounded from every Scottish lip; and indignant at so villanous a rupture of the parley, every bow was drawn to the head, and a flight of arrows armed with retribution flew towards the battlements. All hands were now at work to bring the towers to the wall; and mounting on them; while the archers, by their rapid showers, drove the men from the ramparts, soldiers below with pick-axes destroyed the wall to make a breach.

Cressingham, who began to fear that his boasted auxiliaries might arrive too late, made every effort to gain time; and determining on a stouter resistance here than he had maintained in the town, he shot flights of darts and large stones from

a thousand engines; and discharged burning combustibles over the ramparts, in hopes of setting fire to the enemy's attacking machines.

But all his promptitude proved of no effect. The walls were giving way in parts; and Wallace was mounting by scaling ladders, and clasping the parapets with the bridges from his towers. Driven to extremity, Cressingham resolved to try the attachment of the Scots for Lord Mar; and even at the moment when Wallace, by the first assault, had seized the barbacan and the outer ballium, this sanguinary politician ordered the imprisoned Earl to be brought out upon the wall of the inner ballia. A rope was round his neck, with one end run through a groove which projected from the nearest tower.

At this sight horror froze the ardent blood of Wallace. But the intrepid Earl, descrying his friend on the ladder which would carry him to the summit of the

battlement, exclaimed, "Hesitate not! Let not my span of life stand between my country and this glorious victory!"

"Execute the sentence!" cried the infuriate Cressingham.

At these words Murray and Edwin precipitated themselves from their tower, upon the ramparts, and mowed down all before them in a direction towards their uncle. The lieutenant of Cressingham, who held the cord, aware of the impolicy of the cruel mandate, hesitated to fulfil it; and now fearing a rescue from the impetuous Scots, hurried his victim off the works back to prison. Meanwhile, Cressingham, perceiving that all would be lost, should he suffer the enemy to gain this wall also, sent such numbers upon the men-at-arms who had followed the cousins, that overcoming some, and repelling others, they threw Murray with a sudden violence over the ramparts. Edwin was in a moment surrounded; and they were bearing him off, struggling and

bleeding, when Wallace, springing like a lioness on the hunters carrying away her young, rushed in singly amongst them; he seized Edwin; and while his falchion flashed terrible threatenings in their eyes, with a backward step, he fought his passage to one of the wooden towers he had fastened to the wall.

Cressingham, who was wounded in the head, desired that a parley should be sounded.

"We have already taken Lord de Valence and his host prisoners;" returned Wallace; "and we grant you no cessation of hostilities, till you deliver up the Earl of Mar and his family, and surrender the castle into our hands."

"Think not, proud boaster!" cried the herald of Cressingham, "that we ask a parley to conciliate. It was to tell you, that if you do not draw off directly, not only the Earl of Mar, and his family, but every Scottish prisoner within these walls shall perish in your sight."

While he yet spoke, the Southrons uttered a great shout. And the Scots, looking up, beheld several high poles erected on the roof of the keep, (the lofty tower of which was seen at a little distance, overtopping the interior of the castle;) and the Earl of Mar, as before, was led forward. But he seemed no longer the bold and tranquil patriot. He was surrounded by shrieking female forms clinging to his knees, and his aged hands were lifted to heaven, as if imploring its pity.

"Stop!" cried Wallace, in a voice whose thundering mandate rung from tower to tower. "The instant he dies, Lord Aymer de Valence shall perish."

He had only to make the sign: and in a few minutes that nobleman appeared between Ramsay and Kirkpatrick. Wallace, when he saw him, blushed: "Earl, though I granted your life in the field with reluctance, yet here I am ashamed to put it in danger. But your own peo-

ple compel me. Look on that spectacle! A venerable father in the midst of his family; he and they doomed to an ignominious and instant death, unless I betray my country and abandon these walls! Were I weak enough to purchase their lives at such an expense, they could not survive that disgrace. But that they shall not die while I have power to preserve them, is my resolve and my duty! —Life, then, for life: yours for this family!

"The moment," cried Wallace, directing his voice towards the keep; "in which that vile cord presses too closely the neck of the Earl of Mar, or of any of his blood; the axe shall sever the head of Lord de Valence from his body."

De Valence was now seen on the top of one of the besieging towers. He was pale as death. He trembled; but not with dismay only; ten thousand varying emotions tore his breast. To be thus set up as a monument of his own defeat; to

be threatened with execution by an enemy he had contemned; to be exposed to such indignities by the unthinking ferocity of his colleague; filled him with such contending passions of revenge against friends and foes, that he forgot the present fear of death, in turbulent wishes to deprive of life, them by whom he suffered.

Cressingham became alarmed at seeing the retaliating menace of Wallace brought so directly into execution: and dreading the vengeance of De Valence's powerful family; he ordered a herald to say, that if Wallace would draw off his troops to within the outer ballium until evening, the Lord Mar and his family should be taken from their perilous situation; and he would consider on terms of surrender.

Wallace, well aware that the intentions of Cressingham were only to gain time until De Warenne should arrive, determined to foil him with his own weapons, and make the gaining of the castle the natural consequence of vanquishing the

earl. He told the now perplexed governor, that he should consider Lord de Valence as the hostage of safety for Lord Mar and his family; and therefore he consented to withdraw his men from the inner ballium till the setting of the sun; at which hour he should expect a herald with the surrender of the fortress.

Cressingham, thinking that he had caught the Scottish chief in a snare, and that the Lord Warden's army would be upon him long before the expiration of the armistice; congratulated himself upon his manœuvre; and determined that the moment Earl de Warenne should appear, he would destroy Lord Mar secretly in the dungeons.

Wallace, meanwhile, who fully comprehended what were his enemy's views, and what ought to be his own measures, as soon as he saw the unhappy group disappear from the battlements of the keep, recalled his men from the inner ballium wall; and stationing several detachments

along the ramparts and in the towers of the outer wall; left De Valence in the guard-room of the barbacan, under the charge of Lord Ruthven; who was eager, himself, to hold the means that were to check the threatened danger of relatives so dear to him as were the prisoners in the castle.

END OF THE SECOND VOLUME.

NOTES

TO THE SECOND VOLUME OF

THE SCOTTISH CHIEFS.

([a] p. 4.) The great wall of Severus, which run between Abercorn and Kirkpatrick, being attacked by the Scots at the time the Romans abandoned Britain, a huge breach was made in it by Graham (or Greame) the uncle of the young King of Scots. By this achievement he conquered the whole of the country as far as the Cheviots; and the wall of Severus has since been called Graham's dyke.

([b] p. 11.) This is the tradition respecting Craignacoheilg. Glenfinlass was the favourite chase of the Scottish monarchs.

([c] p. 32.) It was a custom with Scottish chiefs, when any feud existed between their families, to leave the right hand of their children untouched by the holy water in baptism, as a sign that no law,

even of Heaven, should prevent them taking revenge. From this usage Kirkpatrick declares, that the hands of the children in Wallace's train, shall be left unchristened till they have taken vengeance on their oppressors.

([d] p. 41.) This Sir Alexander Scrymgeour was the descendant of the two renowned knights of that name who signalized themselves by similar acts of bravery in the reigns of Malcolm III. and Alexander I. Their name was originally Carron: and the reason of its change is thus recorded. During a rebellion of Malcolm III.'s northern subjects, that monarch was dangerously beset by them on the banks of the Spey. It was necessary he should cross the river, which was perilous in its current, and a strong body of the enemy lined the opposite shore to prevent his landing. The standard-bearer of the royal army, at sight of these dangers made a halt. The King in displeasure snatched the standard from his hand, and gave it to Sir Alexander Carron, who immediately plunged into the river, and swimming to the other side, performed prodigies of valour amongst the rebels. For this service Malcolm gave to him and his posterity the name of Scrymgeour (sharp fight) and made him the royal standard-bearer in the Scottish army. This post was made hereditary in the family by Alexander I. to reward the son of the first of the name of

Scrymgeour, for an action of similar loyalty. Sir Alexander Scrymgeour, the descendant of these heroes, and the friend of Sir William Wallace, proved himself in every way worthy of his ancestors.

([e] p. 42.) A lion gules, in a field d'or, is the arms of Scotland.

([f] p. 52.) Achaius King of Scotland, having won the love and alliance of Charlemagne and of many other christian kings, found himself to be so mighty, that he took for his device the Thistle and Rewe, and for his motto *For my defence.* The Rewe from its salutary properties denoting his wisdom in peace, and the Thistle, by its guardian prickles, exemplifying his power in war.

([g] p. 70.) Albin was the ancient name of Scotland.

([h] p. 106.) Accolade, the three strokes of the sword given in knighting.

([i] p. 106.) It was the custom in Scotland on investing a knight, to present him, along with the sword and consecrated spurs, a girdle of the same sanctity.

([k] p. 161.) The Eildon tree is famous in tradition. It stood near Learmont tower on the Leeder, the seat

of Thomas the sage, or prophet of Ercildown. It was reported that here he met the fairy who endowed him with many supernatural gifts; and that from this spot he generally uttered his predictions. The tree no longer exists, but the place where it stood is marked by a large stone called the Eildon-tree stone.

([l] p. 191.) This tower, within the fortress of Dumbarton, is still called *Wallace's tower;* and a sword is shewn there as the one that belonged to Wallace.

([m] p. 197.) The dangerous gulph of Corie Vrekin lies between the shores of Jura and Scarba. Superstition has tenanted its shelves and eddies with every fabulous dæmon of the ocean; and amongst the rest, tells a thousand wild legends of a beautiful mermaid who holds her marine court beneath its whirlpool. Mr. J. Leydon has written a fine ballad on this subject.

([n] p. 205.) *Cuthon*, means the *mournful sound of waves.*

([o] p. 215.) Birling is a small boat generally used by fishers.

([p] p. 225.) Green was a colour much worn by the ladies in the early ages of Scotland.

([q] p. 228.) *Shealing*, the process of the shepherds ascending into the mountains at a certain time of the year, to feed their flocks.

([r] p. 231.) *Glenshealeach*, means valley of willows.

([s] p. 241.) The *Barns* of Ayr, were the barracks (or palace) built in that town by King Edward, for the occasional residence of his viceroy the Lord Warden.

([t] p. 251.) These names, and many more, fill the list which the Poet Harrie gives of this horrid massacre.

([u] p. 252.) This William Ruthven, Baron of Ruthven on the Spey, and Lord of the Castle of Hunting-tower, which stands on the Tay two miles from Perth, was the ancestor of the Earls of Gowrie, and of the renowned Ruthven, Earl of Forth and Brentford, who so greatly signalized himself in the armies of Gustavus Adolphus. William Lord Ruthven, who with his family were the fast friends of Wallace, performed services to Scotland more numerous than the disposition of these volumes affords room to recount.

([x] p. 257.) *Coronach*, a national dirge sung over the body of a dead chief.

(y p. 260.) *Wake*, is a ceremony still used by the friends of the dead, in the Highlands of Scotland. They sit up with the body to lament over it; and during their time of mourning, regale themselves with sumptuous feasts.

(z p. 264.) The parallel scene to this in blind Harrie's poem is yet more horribly described: its painting might have been too strong for a work of this kind, but the simple and pathetic lamentations of the nurse in the old poem, are not to be equalled by any copy in modern prose.

(aa p. 286.) These were Loudon, Corsbie, Monktown, &c. in Ayrshire; and Auchinames, &c. in Renfrew.

(bb p. 296.) Ralph de Monthermer was a noble knight who married Jane of Acre, the daughter of King Edward the First. He was created Earl of Gloucester on his marriage with this princess.

(cc p. 302.) Sir Richard Maitland of the castle of Thirlestane on the Leeder, is noted in Scottish tradition for his bravery. His valiant defence of his castle against the English in his extreme old age, is still the subject of enthusiasm amongst the people of Lauderdale. He was usually called *the Stalwarth auld knight of Lauderdale*, meaning, the

brave old knight, &c. He had three sons, but only one survived him, who, from that circumstance, was surnamed *burd alane*, which signifies *solitary*.

([dd] p. 303.) Sir Malcolm Wallace, the father of Sir William Wallace, was killed in the year 1295, on Loudon hill in a battle with the English.

([ee] p. 310.) The remains of this ancient seat of the Mar family are yet visible.

([ff] p. 319.) This circumstance is recorded of Sir John Graham and his noble father, who was David Graham, Lord of Dundaff and Kincardine, and a descendant of the renowned Graham from whom the dyke is named.

([gg] p. 326.) *Reviresco!* means, *I bud again!* This encouraging word is now the motto of the Maxwell arms.

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